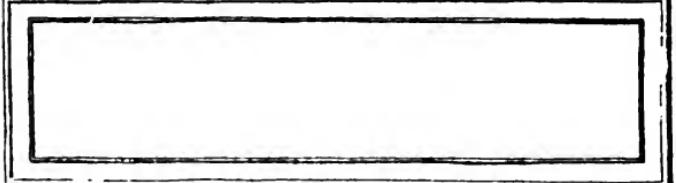






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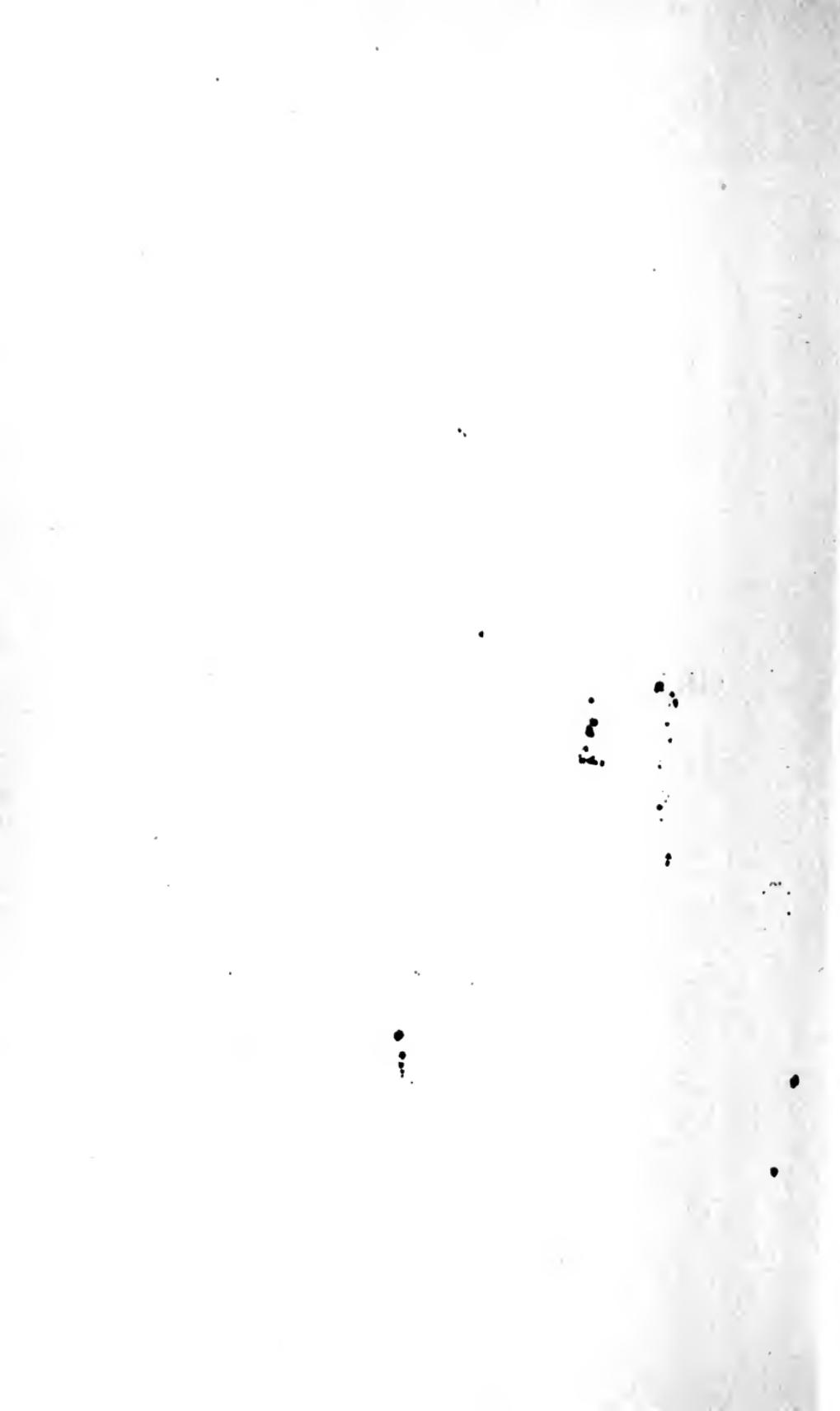






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## **GRAMMAR AND ITS REASONS**

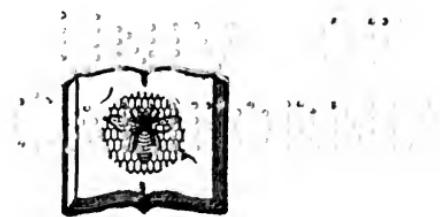


# • GRAMMAR AND ITS REASONS •

FOR STUDENTS AND  
TEACHERS OF THE  
ENGLISH TONGUE

*By MARY HALL LEONARD*

FORMERLY TEACHER OF ENGLISH IN THE BRIDGE-WATER (MASS.) NORMAL SCHOOL AND IN THE WINTHROP NORMAL COLLEGE OF SOUTH CAROLINA



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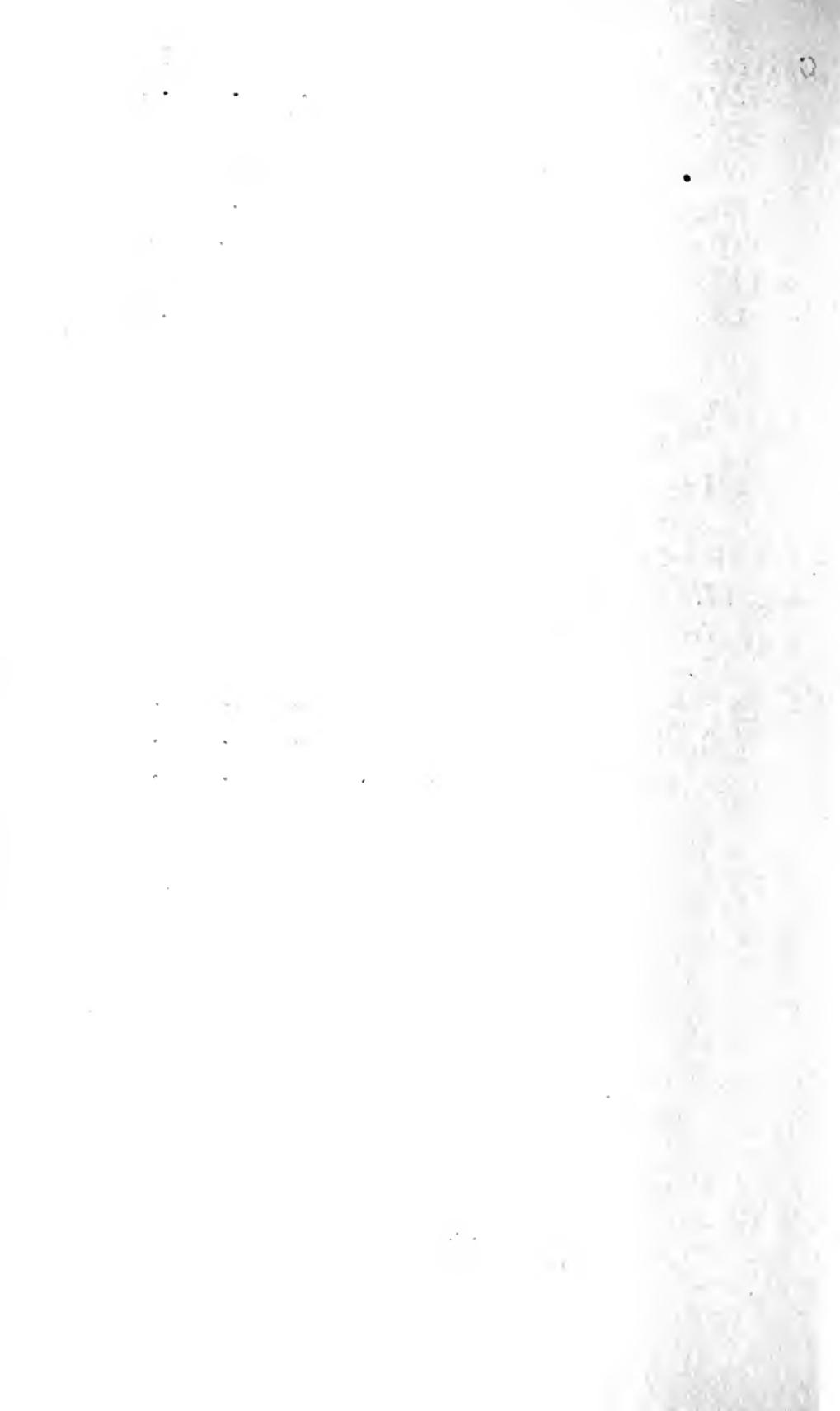
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The lady Gramer in all humbly wyse  
Dyd me receyve into her goodly schoole.

From Stephen Hawes's Allegory (Time of Henry VII)  
5th chapter. "How Science sent him first to Gramer."



## FOREWORD

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A wise abstinence as well as a wise selection is essential to success.—W. D. WHITNEY.

This is not a text-book of English grammar in the ordinary sense. It has no set lessons or exercises to be given to a class of learners, nor does it attempt fully to cover the ground of grammatical science. Such omissions as those of the rules for irregular plurals, the principal parts of strong verbs, the declensions of the personal pronouns, and similar grammatical details have been freely made. All of these are easily accessible in the common school text-books of grammar and their introduction would add nothing to a student's resources.

This is a series of essays, dealing with the more important parts of English grammar, and also to some extent with the development of grammar itself as a science, and with the grammatical changes that have taken place in English since the invention of printing and the growth of modern literature gave a degree of fixity to language forms. It is a free discussion of the present day status of English grammar and of the relations of this science to other forms of language study. The "ins and outs" of grammar, those related ideas that in most modern text-books are made the subject of fine-print footnotes, are here a fundamental part of

the text itself. The aim has been in a condensed and readable form to throw light from various sources upon the difficult parts of this very technical and somewhat unpopular subject, and also to show some of the reasons why English grammar has been cast in the mould in which we find it. Some comparisons of the grammar of English with that of other languages are also included, with the emphasis, however, laid always upon the English side.

There has been no effort to adapt the book to the needs of very elementary students. For this reason illustrations have been somewhat sparingly used, but it is thought that enough are included to make these discussions easily intelligible to those for whom they are chiefly intended.

While this cannot take the place of a text-book of grammar for lower grade schools, it is believed that it will fill an important place as a book to be read and studied, not only by teachers of grammar, but also by students in colleges, normal schools, high schools, and academies, who are looking forward to the teaching of English, or who are specially interested in the study of the English tongue.

Yet the English language belongs to all who speak, and read and write it. Journalists and other writers have their own special relations to the matters here discussed. And there are many general readers whose training and trend of thinking have given them an interest in these subjects. To all of these classes and to the many foreign students of English who have

felt the need of some compendium of English grammar prepared on a more general plan than that of the ordinary text-books, this book is offered in the belief that it will fill a place hitherto unoccupied as an aid to the comprehensive study of the English language.

The book had its immediate beginning in a series of "Talks on Grammar," written for the New England *Journal of Education*. Similar articles, contributed to *The School Journal* and other educational papers, were added, and thanks are due to all these periodicals for permission to republish these in book form. Yet none of these chapters are in their original shape. The whole was afterwards re-written, and much new material was added in order to make a complete and consistent whole. A few chapters addressed to specialists—as teachers of grammar and writers—and a bibliography of the subject, have been added, and constitute "Part Second."

In the preparation of these chapters many text-books, both ancient and modern, have been consulted, and quotations from some of these grammars have been freely used, as chapter headings or in the text itself. The quotation headings do not always agree fully with each other or with the chapter below. They are intended not always to present the author's own view of the subject, but to serve as side lights, showing how the phases of grammar have been variously treated by different writers and in different ages. The selection of these significant extracts from other writings on grammar has occupied many pleasant hours, and

it is believed that the introduction of this feature will add greatly to the value of the book. Many other quotations of nearly equal interest might have been chosen, and there has been a temptation to extend this element of the book to larger limits. But some restraint seemed to be needful here, as this is not intended as a "grammar of grammars" after the Goold Brown pattern, but as a presentation of the best modern thought on the subject of English grammar.

Some of the quotations used are the gatherings of a teacher's notebook through many years of teaching, and it has not seemed possible in every instance to trace the quotation to its original source. Most of them, however, have been freshly selected as the direct result of the extensive reading required by the preparation of this book.

The author wishes to acknowledge many kind and helpful suggestions from personal friends engaged in normal school, college, and editorial work, who have taken an interest in the preparation of this book. Special thanks are given to Professor E. S. Joynes, of South Carolina College, who read the book in manuscript, giving much valuable and critical help. Acknowledgments are also due to Professors F. A. Blackburn and A. H. Tolman, of Chicago University, for material included in certain chapters. Secretary G. H. Martin, of the Massachusetts Board of Education; Principals A. G. and A. C. Boyden, and the teachers of English and of foreign language in the Bridgewater Normal School; Dr. William Hayes

Ward, editor of the New York *Independent*; Miss Sarah L. Arnold, Dean of Simmons College, and other competent critics have also given personal attention and helpful comments to the manuscript of this book. Finally, to her pupils in English grammar, whose thoughtful questions and interest in the subject have stimulated research, the thanks of the author are due for the invaluable aid thus given.



# GRAMMAR AND ITS REASONS

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## I

### PRESENT-DAY ENGLISH GRAMMAR

There is an ever increasing class of persons, so heterodox as to advocate that English which hitherto has sat with exceeding humility in the lower seats of the synagogue shall be bidden universally to come up higher.—WELSH.

Some superfluities have been expunged, some mistakes have been rectified, and some obstacles have been removed.  
—GOOLD BROWN.

We are freeing ourselves from the tyranny of Latin models and are substituting a grammar which deals simply with the vital facts of the English tongue.—CHUBB.

In offering to the public a new presentation of an old subject, one faces two practical questions: Is the subject itself of vital interest to the present age? And does the new treatment really add anything of value to the older writings on the subject?

The first question, as applied to English grammar, would be answered by many persons in the negative. The revelations of natural science are giving a new interpretation to the universe. Philosophy, theology, and psychology are changing their points of view and making conquests in hitherto unexplored fields. The

development of art in America is opening new vistas to the esthetic imagination. History is re-writing itself upon new basic principles, and social science is grappling complex problems of vital importance to the practical welfare of mankind. How then can such an abstract or unpractical subject as the theories of grammatical relationships gain a hearing from this busy age?

Furthermore, is there anything new to be said on the old and hackneyed subject? When Goold Brown's Grammar of Grammars was published at the middle of the nineteenth century it seemed as if all that had ever been thought or that could be thought regarding English grammar had been gathered into that voluminous compilation. But of making many grammar books there has been no end in the years that have passed since then.

Yet in spite of all this, we venture to think that English grammar has not been worn threadbare; that it has a sort of perennial value to an important, even if limited, class of the world's thinkers, and that with all the other sciences, it has its new message for the new age.

In the famous "Report of the Committee of Fifteen on the Correlation of Studies in Elementary Schools," published in 1895 by the National Educational Association, Dr. W. T. Harris, the author of the report, uses these words: "Grammar is the science of language, and as the first of the seven liberal arts, it has long held sway in school as the disciplinary study *par*

*excellence.* A survey of its educational value, subjective and objective, usually produces the conviction that it is to retain the first place in the future. Its chief objective advantage is that it shows the structure of language and the logical forms of subject, predicate, and modifier, thus revealing the essential nature of thought itself, the most important of all objects because it is self-object."

Yet with this high estimate of the value of grammar comes the word of limitation and of caution. The same report well says: "No formal labor on a great objective field is ever wholly lost, . . . but it is easy for any special formal discipline when continued too long, to paralyze or arrest growth at that stage. . . . Grammar, rich as it is in its contents, is only a formal discipline as respects the scientific, historic, or literary contents of language, and is indifferent to them. A training for four or five years in parsing and grammatical analysis, practised on literary works of art (Milton, Shakespeare, Tennyson, Scott), is a training of the pupil into habits of indifference toward, and neglect of, the genius employed in the literary work of art. . . . Your Committee is unanimous in the conviction that formal grammar should not be allowed to usurp the place of a study of the literary work of art in accordance with literary method."

Grammar has other deficiencies as a language study which literature alone cannot supply. The habit of mind which grammar induces is critical and this always impedes fluency of expression. Although gram-

mar is one of the important aids to composition, yet in the act of speaking or writing, grammar itself and its hampering rules should be forgotten, while the mind gives itself up to the spontaneous expression of its own thought. Grammar is able to achieve its own ends perfectly only when it is pursued side by side with literary study and practical composition, each of the three aiding and supplementing the other two in the united effort to produce genuine language power.

But after all its limitations have been conceded, and the claims of other branches of knowledge provided for, there still remains a clear field of perpetual human interest in the subjects that grammar deals with.

In this territory new mines of great depth and richness have been opened during recent years. Comparative and historical grammar has added much to the older material. The English language has been gaining in powers of expression, and in prestige among the languages of the world. In this process it has cast off some old restraints and has added new logical relationships, which require grammatical interpretation. Much interesting material has been brought forward by writers on grammar within a generation, and this needs to be sifted and classified, and to find clear and permanent expression for the general public.

And so it does not seem an ignoble or valueless task to bring together these newer thoughts that have presented themselves to thinkers, and to set forth in a new book in these early years of the twentieth century, the status of *Present-Day English Grammar*.

## II

### HISTORIC GROWTH OF GRAMMAR

In science, a phenomenon is explained by its antecedent phenomena. A tree is explained, not by its full-leaved glory, but by the states and forms through which it has successively advanced.—WELSH.

Under the light that has come from the advance in English philology the old notion that the best approach to English grammar is through the Latin grammar, has vanished forever.—ALLEN.

The real history of grammar is little known, because the story of the systems most generally received has never been fully told.—GOOLD BROWN.

(Grammarians are the guardians, not the authors, of language.—TRANSLATED FROM SENECA.)

The history of a science often shows peculiar phases, but perhaps none has had more marked mutations than have been felt by English grammar. The form which the science has taken bears curious marks of the history through which it has passed, and the present grammar ideals are to be interpreted in part by the early history.

In tracing these changes one needs to bear in mind the important distinction between Universal or General grammar, and the particular grammar of an individual tongue. Long before the specific grammar of English was thought of, the principles of general grammar

were wrought out through the Greek and Latin languages and were applied to English by the classical scholars of England. The history of English grammar cannot be given without tracing this earlier development of general grammar.

The earliest traces of grammatical study that we have any record of, come from Chaldea. The scholars of that ancient kingdom compiled dictionaries to aid themselves in learning the language of a still earlier people who occupied the same territory. Fragments of these ancient writings have been found in the ruins of the royal libraries of Sargon and Assurbanipal. This purpose of acquiring foreign languages, rather than of understanding or perfecting the use of one's own tongue, was the dominant one in early grammatical studies, and it still holds as an important reason for the study of grammar to-day.

It was among the Greeks that the doctrine of the Parts of Speech first appeared. Plato began it by dividing words into nouns and verbs, but without defining either. Aristotle, for rhetorical purposes, added conjunctions and articles, but by the latter he meant chiefly pronouns or relatives. Protagoras, Aristophanes, and other Grecian writers advanced certain grammatical ideas, but the science of grammar did not advance very far within the borders of ancient Greece itself.

The critical study of language was really begun by Greek scholars at Alexandria about 250 B. C. In this city about 10,000 students were gathered from

all parts of the world to make use of the famous libraries where all languages having any claim to literature were represented. Zenodotus, the first librarian, pointed out personal pronouns as a class of words, also the singular, dual, and plural numbers of substantives. About a hundred years B. C., Aristarchus founded in Alexandria a celebrated grammatical and critical school. It was he who discussed prepositions for the first time, and the Alexandrian students made other contributions to the growing language study.

Later it became fashionable for young Roman gentry to learn Greek. About 29 B. C., Dionysius, who had been a pupil in the Alexandrian School, went from Asia Minor to Rome as professor of Greek, and the lectures which he gave there were finally reduced to book form. This was the earliest European treatise on grammar and it is still extant.

During the Gallic War Caesar wrote in his tent a treatise on grammatical matters, and invented the term "ablative case." In the first century A. D., Quintilian wrote a complete system of rhetoric in twelve books, in which verbs, nouns, and adjectives are recognized, but not the other parts of speech. By the writings of Dionysius, Quintilian, and their successors, the Latin language was finally pressed into the mould of Greek grammar, much as in later ages the languages of modern Europe have been interpreted through the forms of Latin. The form of grammar as taught during the middle ages was finally fixed by Priscian, who was master of a famous school

in Constantinople, and who, about 525 A. D., wrote a very famous book on grammar. His rigid attention to grammatical correctness gave rise to the phrase "breaking Priscian's head," which was applied to the violators of grammatical rules. By thus fixing the form of grammar for the Middle Ages, he laid the foundations for modern grammar.

The first manuals of grammar used in England were not English grammars in any sense. Most of them were written in Latin. Others were simply translations of the Latin "Accidence," written to aid British youth in gaining a knowledge of the Latin tongue without any thought of accuracy in their own.

Of the early Latin grammars that were in use in England before English grammar originated, much might be said. One of these, called the *Minerva* of *Sanctius*, is thus described by Dr. W. T. Harris:

"This *Minerva* of *Sanctius* is a wonderful collection of deep studies on Latin declensions and conjugations, the logical basis for the distinction of the parts of speech, a valuable treatise on syntax. When one first studies *Sanctius* he is amazed to find how much philosophy of grammar has really been forgotten or has never found its way into English grammar."

The idea of applying grammar to English does not seem to have dawned until the time of the Tudor kings. Even then it was not English grammar that was directly taught. It was still the grammar of Latin, written however with the added idea that all grammar could be taught through the medium of Latin.

But the grammar of the highly inflected Latin, with its large syntax dependent on inflection, proved to be a gigantic mould for the vigorous English which had cast off most of the old Anglo-Saxon inflections and agreements, thus making its word relations mostly logical, rather than dependent on grammatical forms. It is little wonder that the later history of English grammar has presented many phases and has had curious reactions, both in its aim and in the methods by which it has been pursued.

Most famous among the grammars of England during this Latin-English period, was that of William Lily, the first high master of St. Paul's School. Parts of this grammar were written expressly for use in this school and so gained the name of "Paul's Accidence." Lily died of the plague in 1522, and his grammatical writings were not published in collected form until twenty years later. About 1543, by order of King Henry the Eighth, Lily's book was put into final shape and ordered to be the standard book on grammar in the English kingdom. It soon became known as the grammar of King Henry the Eighth, though Erasmus and other scholars took part in the revised work and John Colet wrote for it an introduction which was the first attempt to write a formal treatise on English grammar. The author treated English as in all respects like Latin or Greek, with no laws of its own. This famous grammar of William Lily or King Henry the Eighth, was written in English, but applied directly to the Latin tongue,

and was intended as a general work on the science of grammar. It named eight parts of speech, though not precisely the same ones that are recognized to-day. For two hundred years Lily's grammar was a standard text-book in England.

Another interesting ancient grammar was Pals-greve's remarkable French grammar, composed for the use of the Princess Mary, and printed in 1530. It contained a French Accidence and Syntax, with idioms and vocabulary. The book was written in English and it illustrated the French by comparison with English; so it has been of high value in showing the authorized forms of English of that date.

Colet's Introduction to Lily's Latin Grammar is now recognized by scholars as the first genuinely English grammar. Yet this honor was claimed for that of William Bullokar, who published in 1586 A Bref Grammar for English, which he declared was "The first grammar for English that ever waz except my grammar at large." Of the "Grammar at large," no trace can now be found. After this, various grammars of English were prepared, though some of these were still written in Latin, like that of John Wallis, in the time of William and Mary.

Among the eighteenth century grammar makers we find the names of Sir Richard Steele and Dr. Samuel Johnson. In Steele's grammar, which was published in 1712, the distinguished author tried to make his subject more interesting to pupils by putting many of his rules and principles into verse, a device which has

been adopted by many later writers on the dry subject of grammar.

Thus Steele wrote:

Grammar do's all the arts and knowledge teach  
According to the Use of every speech,  
How we our Thoughts most justly may express  
In Words together joined in Sentences.

One of the most important text-books of the eighteenth century was Dr. Robert Lowth's *Short Introduction to English Grammar*, published in 1763. It had a wide use and is recognized as having been the chief model for the still more famous Lindley Murray's grammar a generation later. In issuing his grammar near the close of the eighteenth century, Murray acknowledges for his materials books by Harris, Johnson, Lowth, Priestley, Beattie, Sheridan, Walker, and Coote. Several other English grammars that were issued previous to Murray's are not included in this list.

The most interesting and curious of eighteenth century books on English grammar is that of John Horne Tooke, who published in 1786 his famous *Epea Pteroenta, or Diversions of Purley*, in which, under the form of dialogue, he advances various ingenious grammatical theories; such as, that all the little connecting words (or particles) of language are relics of once active nouns or verbs. Horne Tooke made many mistakes and was a most imperfect guide, yet his astute discussions are still read with some interest by students, and throw considerable light,

not so much on the facts of grammar, as on the varied history through which the science has passed.

But among the names of English grammarians before the nineteenth century, there is none that can rank in point of popular favor and influence with that of Lindley Murray. He was a Pennsylvanian Quaker, who, removing to England, published about 1790 the first of the many school-books which have borne his name. The multiplied copies of these books are said to have reached a sale of five millions or more in England and America.

Murray's grammar was professedly a compilation and has been criticised by Goold Brown and others as not being a work of original scholarly research. But while other grammatical treatises may have been more profound and original, the work of putting into popular form the approved thought of the age on a subject of universal interest is not one to be treated with light appreciation. It was Lindley Murray's grammar more than any other influence, perhaps, that has fixed the form and nomenclature of modern English grammar.

From the time of Ben Jonson until a few years ago the text-books in grammar included five stereotyped divisions: Orthoepy, Orthography, Etymology, Syntax, and Prosody. But modern thinking has considerably reduced the range of the subject, and only a part of Etymology (dealing with grammatical inflections) and Syntax, are now usually reckoned as legitimate parts of grammar.

### III

## GRAMMAR IN AMERICA AND REACTIONS AGAINST FORMAL GRAMMAR

The varietie of teaching is divers yet and always will be for that every schole maister liketh that he knoweth and seeth not the use of that he knoweth not.—GRAMMAR OF KING HENRY THE EIGHTH.

Two generations ago the watchwords of the parties into which the educational world was divided were “Grammar thorough and systematic,” and “No teaching of grammar in the schools.”—F. H. DALE.

It is only too easy to overdo the teaching of formal grammar.—LEWIS.

The uselessness of “make-believe grammar” was responsible for a marked reaction against all formal teaching of English grammar, which was very noticeable for a time.—A. H. TOLMAN.

Sir, the English language has no grammar at all.—DR. JOHNSON.

The well-known facts brought out by R. G. White and others do not show that English is a grammarless tongue; but only, so to speak, a concordless tongue. The objection holds good against the old conception of grammar, but has no weight against the modern conception of grammar.—CARPENTER, BAKER, AND SCOTT.

Near the close of the eighteenth century an impulse to grammatical activity began to show itself in America as well as in England. In some old libraries may be

found an interesting little book in board covers called *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language*, by Noah Webster, Jun., printed at Boston in 1790. This was one of a series of three school-books by Webster, of which the famous blue-backed speller was one. In his *Grammatical Institute*, the author modestly says, "I have attempted to simplify a very complex subject and shall always feel indebted to the man who shall suggest any improvement."

Noah Webster had a unique place as a grammarian. He was very learned, but an iconoclast, and somewhat changeable in his views. In one of his books he names eight parts of speech, but in another he follows the lead of Lowth and others, and recognizes only six. His grammatical writings would perhaps have had a larger influence but for the overpowering circulation of Murray's grammar that appeared very soon afterwards in England and was for half a century a standard text-book in Great Britain and America.

In 1799 Caleb Bingham (the author of two other ancient school-books, *The American Preceptor*, and *The Columbian Orator*,) issued the first edition of *The Young Lady's Accidence*, which was "Designed principally for the use of young learners, more especially of the *Fair Sex*, though proper for the other." It had upon its title page the familiar couplet:

Delightful task! to rear the tender thought,  
To teach the young idea how to shoot.

This was the first English grammar used in the Boston

public schools, though this, as well as Webster's Grammatical Institute, was soon superseded by Murray's grammar.

But as interest in the subject increased, other grammars were published in America, following more or less closely Murray's plan, until the work of elaboration culminated, about the middle of the nineteenth century, in that great thesaurus of rules and exceptions, Goold Brown's Grammar of Grammars, a closely printed volume of more than a thousand pages. This phenomenal book for a long time went begging for a publisher who would dare to undertake such a publication. But at last the Legislature of Massachusetts became its patron. The book was printed and a copy given to each of the members of the Legislature.

Busy people of to-day have little use for this great grammar of grammars, but the book remains in libraries as a monumental piece of human labor and a standard encyclopedia of grammatical information up to the time when it was written.

Meanwhile the methods of grammar used in the schools were also becoming much elaborated. An important step in the history of grammar method was made about 1823, when Kirkham's grammar was published, containing a carefully developed "Systematic Order of Parsing." Elaborate parsing models were given and the parsing of standard literature became an important school exercise.

In 1847 another important innovation in grammar method was caused by the publication of Samuel S.

Greene's English Analysis. A few years later this book was extensively used in grammar classes all over the country and had added to the older parsing practices some elements of real value.

But in the midst of all this development of the science and method of grammar, for many years during the nineteenth century a counter movement was taking place. A strong opposition was developed to English grammar itself, as well as to the ideas that it had become burdened with.

The fact that English grammar had been founded upon the forms of Latin had brought into the textbooks distinctions which did not really exist in the language. It was not that scholarly men really believed that English had all these grammatical distinctions, but it was still felt that English must be interpreted by the principles that had been wrought out through the study of Latin.

But during the first half of the nineteenth century, thoughtful men began to sift the Essentials of English Grammar from the heterogeneous mass which had been gathered. In 1833 William B. Fowle, a Boston teacher, put forth *A Rational Grammar*, declaring that verbs have no voice, nor mood, and only two tenses,—with many other radical changes.

Especially after so large a showing as was made by Goold Brown's *Grammar of Grammars*, it was not to be wondered at that the pendulum should swing rapidly toward the other extreme.

It began to be whispered in various quarters that

the ends for which grammar had been pursued were not realized by this means. Grammar had not succeeded in making people "speak and write correctly."

Another idea that dawned upon educators was that the scope of grammar was narrower than had hitherto been accorded to it. Students decided that Orthoepy, Orthography, Prosody, and a part of Etymology itself were not really a part of grammar,—that only the inflections of words, and the word order and relations of the sentence were legitimately to be included. Between 1860 and 1880 there was a great descent in the size of grammar treatises and various thin booklets came into being, each claiming to contain "all that there is of English grammar."

Yet, when that bold iconoclast and keen verbal critic, Richard Grant White, published *Words and Their Uses*, with its chapter on "The Grammarless Tongue," and a few years later, *Every Day English*, in which he declared that "there really is no such thing as grammar in the English language," no little buzzing was heard in the hive of busy grammarians.

When the natural opposition to such ultra sentiments had somewhat subsided, the effect of the whole mixed discussion became manifest in an epidemic of books of "Language Lessons," books large and small, good, bad, and indifferent, all specially recommended for schools as ignoring the distinctions of technical grammar. Towns and cities began to question the advisability of having any formal grammar taught in their schools, and even the Connecticut State Board of

Education discontinued the State examinations in English grammar, giving the following reasons:\*

"(1) The study of grammar or analysis does not help us either to speak or write our language. (2) As a study, technical grammar is hateful to any child and belongs to an advanced course, if anywhere. Its use in an elementary school is contrary to all approved pedagogical theories. (3) There is not time for such work, and for other subjects that belong to our civilization. (4) We are convinced that the discipline said to be derived from the study of grammar can be secured by the study of other subjects, for instance, natural science, which of itself furnishes practical knowledge."

But even at this stage of the history there were not wanting those who declared that "the new departure in language study was an unfortunate one," that the text-book makers had "gone to the opposite extreme, ruling out those parts of English grammar which are absolutely indispensable to a knowledge of our language," and that "sentence-building can never be a substitute for solid grammar." The writings of the late Professor Whitney, a few years ago, marked an important advance in the right understanding of the place and value of scientific grammar.

The tendency of recent educational thinking has been toward the strengthening of grammar as a school study as well as toward important modifications in the way the subject is to be treated. Within a few years an unparalleled number of grammar text-books

\*Cited in F. A. Barbour's *History of English Grammar Teaching*. *Educational Review*, December, 1896.

(or of series of language lessons, always culminating in a course of scientific grammar), have been published,—of differing degrees of excellence, yet all of them showing improvements upon the grammars of the older type. Historical grammar and comparative grammar are throwing light on idiomatic English constructions, and students and teachers are recognizing the value of English grammar as a disciplinary study, and also as an aid to correctness in the use of our own language, and to the acquirement of foreign tongues.

The status of English grammar in the schools, however, is still somewhat chaotic. Yet it is no longer a question whether grammar shall be studied. The questions now are those of detail; when shall it be studied, and how, and what ends are to be held in view in the study of grammar? A truer recognition of the educational value and also of the limitations of grammar has been gained. "Language lessons" have come into the schools to stay, and their value is unchallenged. Yet grammar will not again be displaced in the school curriculum. It holds a central position in formal language study, and with all its limitations it is able in its own way to give elements of linguistic training that can be arrived at by no other means.

## IV

### GRAMMAR AND LOGIC

Grammar is the logic of speech, even as logic is the grammar of reason.—MAX MÜLLER.

Study of the sentence includes study of the thought, a sort of unconscious psychology, the more unconscious the better.—E. S. JOYNES.

A boy who is intelligently analyzing language is analyzing the processes of thought, and is a logician without knowing it.—S. S. LAURIE.

Grammatical analysis cannot be committed to memory; it is a direct exercise of all the logical faculties.—F. A. BARBOUR.

While these two sciences mutually illustrate each other a clear separation between them would probably have the effect of elevating the latter (*i. e.*, grammar) into an importance not hitherto assigned it.—THOMSON'S OUTLINES OF THE LAWS OF THOUGHT.

Certainly while logic derives such help from grammar the reverse should be true and our grammars placed upon a direct logical footing.—C. C. EVERETT IN SCIENCE OF THOUGHT.

Consider for a moment what grammar is. It is the most elementary part of logic. It is the beginning of the analysis of the thinking process. The principles and rules of grammar are the means by which the forms of language are made to correspond with the Universal forms of thought.—JOHN STUART MILL.

In the reactions against grammar during the last century it was sometimes said that the analytical study of sentences, except to a very limited degree, is not really grammar at all. Grammar relates to the inflectional forms of words and the agreement of these forms. But modern English has lost most of these inflectional forms, thus becoming "a logical rather than a grammatical language." Hence the analysis of English sentences and most of what is known as parsing, was said to be an exercise in logic rather than in true grammar.

This is a question of terms and their definition. Modern linguists and logicians would by no means restrict the term grammar so as to exclude the study of word relations, even when these are not definitely pointed out by inflections and agreements. Much of English grammar is really included in the domain of logic. From the modern point of view grammar includes all the analytical study that is needed to make plain the structure of the English sentence, including its logical relationships as well as the grammatical forms of words and the government and agreements of these forms.

Thought controls the forms of language, and neither the thought nor the sentence can be really studied except in connection with each other. The grammatical forms that are still retained in English cannot be understood except through a knowledge of the logical relationships of the sentence. And on the other hand these grammatical forms, even though few in number,

are material aids in gaining a knowledge of the logical relationships. Yet the logical relations cannot be fully understood if studied simply in connection with these small remainders of grammatical forms. It needs a far larger analytic study of sentences to enable the student to deal intelligently with the abbreviated grammatical facts that still belong to the English tongue. John Stuart Mill once said that "a system of logic must be based on a sound system of grammar." It is also true that a system of grammar finds its necessary foundation in logic and cannot be studied without entering somewhat freely into that domain.

But while the field of thought is in a measure common, the manner of approach to the given facts is different. In the study of logic, as well as in the act of expression itself, the form is approached from the thought side. But in the analysis of sentences the order is reversed and the thought is approached from the form side. Grammar looks first at the sentence and passes from that to the elements of the thought expressed by it. Logic takes first the thought and then decides how the sentence structure is made to fit this thought.

A conspicuous illustration of the difference between grammar and logic in dealing with the same set of objective facts, comes at the very beginning of the study of grammar, in the two natural views that may be taken of the sentence,—that is, the two-part and three-part theories of sentence construction. Both ways of looking at the sentence need to come before

the mind, and to be reconciled if the student of either grammar or logic is not to be thrown into mental confusion.

But while the study of logical relationship and grammatical form must proceed side by side, each illustrating and aiding the other, great care should be taken never to confound the two points of view. In the treatment of Case, for instance, a grammatical writer must never permit a confusion to arise in his own thought or in that of his readers, as to whether the inflectional form or the logical relationship of the substantive is the point on which the mind is to be centered. So closely are the relations of thought and of its expression intermingled that it is a matter of no small difficulty, sometimes, to avoid confounding the one with the other. That they have often been confounded is the cause of many of the disputes that have arisen among grammarians. But although the logician and the grammarian have different ends in view, there are many facts which they must deal with in common, and so far as the structure of language is concerned they must not antagonize each other.

More than a hundred years ago the celebrated Horne Tooke made the first serious and avowed effort "to introduce logic into grammar." He was an able and ingenious writer, but linguistic thought has made large advance since his period, and there is little of value for the present age in the curious *Diversions of Purley*, which he wrote. Other writers have attempted (though in different literary form) to

straighten out the relations of logic and grammar, which still remain somewhat perplexing and difficult to handle consistently.

The best result of the study of grammar, however, is a logical habit of mind. The effort to analyze a difficult passage leads to a fuller appreciation of its meaning, and this in turn cultivates accuracy both in one's own thought and in its final expression. Nor does the advantage end here. Through the keen perception of clearness of construction thus gained, the student not only gains a mastery over his native language, but he finds in it also a firm basis for the right understanding and rapid acquirement of foreign tongues.

## V

### UNIVERSAL AND PARTICULAR GRAMMAR

English grammar is but a branch of the general science of philology, a new variety or species sprung up from the old stock long ago transplanted from the soil of Greece and Rome.—GOOLD BROWN.

Philology in its larger sense includes all that is or can be meant by Grammar.—EARLE.

Whatever harmony is possible between English grammar and the grammar of other languages should be sought if the value of grammatical study is believed to lie in any degree in making easier for the student the approach to other languages.—DAVENPORT AND EMERSON.

The grammar of a given language may in theory be divided into two parts, one treating of general grammar, or the universal principles that belong to the grammars of all languages, the other dealing only with the particular grammar of the individual language. But while the idea is a suggestive one, the plan has never yet been carried out in a manner that seems entirely satisfactory for class use.

The original idea of grammar was that of a universal science in which different languages shared in varying degrees. We have seen that the earliest grammars issued in England were books of general grammar, written however in Latin and applied directly to that language as being the one that best exemplified the

principles of grammar. It was felt that English had little of real grammar and that all that it contains could easily be learned by the study of general grammar through the medium of Latin. Something of the same idea is still prevalent in schools and colleges to-day.

And there is some justification for this thought. Every one must agree that a knowledge of Latin grammar throws great illumination upon the structural study of English. Yet there are not many modern educators who would admit, either that a knowledge of general grammar is sufficient for one's understanding of English, or that an adequate knowledge of English grammar can be gained through the medium of Latin. It is only by the study of English itself that a true knowledge of English can be acquired.

A certain amount of distinction between the universal and the particular, however, is advisable in a course in grammar. The idea of case, for instance, belongs to general grammar. A student gains this idea most fully if it can be illustrated by examples taken from several different languages. But to know the specific cases belonging to a given language, to be familiar with all the words having case properties, to understand all the sentence relations which these cases can hold, and to form the habit of using them correctly in all these relations, constitutes a much larger bulk of grammatical acquirement than the mere knowledge of the primary case idea. So many are the details of specific grammar that cluster around each universal idea, that even in English, which of all modern lan-

guages is most free from grammatical fetters, it is still true that "universal grammar constitutes but a very small part of the particular grammar of a language."

A knowledge of English grammar, then, implies some knowledge of the principles of universal grammar, the recognition of the ways in which these principles are applied in making the forms of English, and also a recognition of all the departures from general grammar that have gained an authorized place in either spoken or written English. This knowledge is to be acquired chiefly by the student's own examination of the current language and literature of the period in which he lives. Yet historical and comparative methods of grammar study are also needed to secure that knowledge of general grammar which is implied in a true knowledge of English grammar.

## VI

### OBJECT AND METHOD OF GRAMMAR

The duty of the grammarian is not to invent or create but to state and classify the facts as he finds them.—RAMSEY.

The laws and principles which underlie the construction of sentences are all embodied in sentences, and the student may study them directly, *first-hand*, just as he studies the flower in botany, or the rock in geology; and if he forgets the rule he has only to examine a few sentences and restate it for himself.—WISELY'S STUDIES IN THE SCIENCE OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR."

Whereas we learn a foreign language through and by means of its grammar we must learn and discover English grammar through and by means of the language.—FITCH.

Elementary oral correctness and an elementary sentence sense should be the first objects of grammar study.—LEWIS.

The aim has been to present in compact and orderly system the cardinal facts of the English language—to feed the mind as well as to train it, and thus give to the study of English no inconsiderable place in general culture.—WELSH.

Grammar is a reflective study of language, for a variety of purposes, of which correctness in writing is only one and a secondary or subordinate one, by no means unimportant, but best attained when sought indirectly.—WHITNEY.

In teaching grammar it ought not to be the teacher's object to enable the pupil to speak English but to understand it.—ABBOTT

Two widely different views of the object of grammar study have prevailed among educators. Some textbooks affirm definitely, or in substance, that "the design of English grammar now is, and always has been, to teach the art of speaking and writing the English language with propriety," and that "Grammars should be guides plain and direct to correct writing and speaking."

That grammar will give, and ought to give, principles of criticism whose application will conduce to correct writing and speaking, no one will deny. Yet, as an offset to this class of grammarians who pride themselves on making grammar "an entirely practical subject," there are others who maintain that a still higher purpose in grammar is the gaining of reflective power, and that mere correctness is a secondary object. W. D. Whitney once wrote: "Grammar will be ready, by-and-by, to do its part in correcting and polishing our usages, but only in its own time and way. We may turn it at once into an apparatus for discovering and eliminating errors of speech—but only at the risk of sacrificing more legitimate objects. The real aim of grammar is to turn the lights of intelligent reflection upon the instrumentality of thought, to see what is its structure in word and phrase, to look at the familiar facts in their resemblances and differences, their connections and relations;—and this partly for its own sake, partly for what it leads to."

These opposing views of the aim to be sought in the study of grammar, are the cause of the chief differ-

ences in the methods used. Grammar pursued for the second and higher end is necessarily an analytical subject. The analytic method will develop some principles that will conduce indirectly to the "art of speaking and writing correctly"; yet it is now universally conceded that power in the use of language is gained more directly by constructive methods than by the analysis of language forms. Through practice in using language under wise direction the child comes to an understanding of what correct English is, and gains the habit of using it. The later analytical study will indeed give him more sure and final tests which he can apply to his language and so confirm the good habits which he has acquired. Yet most of his knowledge of the requirements of English comes to the child at an earlier age, and in other ways than through the study of formal grammar.

Nor are the final tests of correctness best gained by making them the direct end and aim of the grammatical study. The power of discriminating criticism is subtle and far-reaching, and demands an intimate knowledge of all the language facts. In other words, the so-called "practical aim of grammar," that is, the discovering and eliminating of errors in speech, can never be fully attained except through the pursuit of its higher end,—namely, the gaining of reflective power.

The facts of language with which grammar deals should be acquired by the same inductive methods that are used in all modern scientific study. The student of English is an explorer in language fields,

searching out language facts by his own investigations, and forming his own conclusions.

Dogmatism is one of the most serious as well as most frequent faults in grammatical treatises. As has been well said, "The grammarian is not to take the position of one who lays down the law of the language, saying, 'You should say this or that, or you violate a rule of grammar,' but rather 'You see that we (you and I and all who speak good English) say thus and so.' Therefore we hold this as a principle of our language."\*

There is a peculiarity in grammar as a study that needs to be taken full account of in the method pursued. The native student comes to the study having already a good command of the facts with which he is to deal. He knows the forms of words and phrases and can in general tell bad English from good. If his environment has been so unfortunate that he has not the power of doing this, the analytical parts of his language work should not be omitted. They should be fully supplemented, however, by a large amount of constructive work as well. Yet it is the student that can already "speak and write correctly" who is in the best position to get the highest benefits of a course in grammar. For such a student the chief object to be gained is a clearer and more exact sense of the relations of thought. Out of a good grammatical drill one who is seldom or never guilty of a grammatical solecism may gain a fine culture which it is idle to depreciate, and which will yield rich results in increasing the perfections of thought and its expression.

\* Professor Whitney, in *Journal of Education*.

## VII

### THE SENTENCE UNIT

"First the whole, afterward the parts."

A sentence must be looked upon as the first creation of language.—HISTORY OF LANGUAGE, BY STRONG, LOGEMAN, AND WHEELER.

The thought is the unit in thinking, hence the sentence is the unit in speech.—BOYDEN.

The sentence is the structural unit in the use of language. A knowledge of its elements and their relation one to another must logically precede any detailed study of words and their forms.—SOUTHWORTH.

The larger elements of sentence-structure are the foundations of grammar, and these must be familiar before the pupil is ready for the study of separate words.—BUEHLER.

Psychologists and logicians in all times and almost without exception, have insisted that the sentence must have three parts corresponding to the three elements of the judgment.—WISELY.

One would naturally expect the sentence to correspond as to number of parts with the judgment which it expresses; but since we commonly find the copula and attribute combined in one symbol, it is convenient to include these two offices under the term predicate, and so to divide the sentence into two parts only.—IRENE M. MEAD, IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND ITS GRAMMAR.

The distinction of the noun and the verb as the two essential constituents of the true sentence, the one naming some-

thing, the other asserting something about it—this was the first distinction successfully made in the historical development of our speech.—WHITNEY.

The study of the grammar of a foreign language begins naturally with the study of words and their inflections. So also the older treatises on English grammar usually begin with the parts of speech. But the newer views of the purpose of the study of grammar have changed the point of beginning. The very name “parts of speech” emphasizes the fact that there is a whole of speech that is larger than the classes of words to be studied.

Speech is made up of sentences, and words considered in their relation to sentences, are “parts of speech.” The essential facts of the sentence as a whole and of the parts of speech which compose the sentence, these are the fundamental elements of grammar. The best modern grammarians are united in the view that some knowledge of the general plan of the sentence must precede any attempt to deal with words on a grammatical basis.

The sentence is the expression of a thought and is therefore the unit of connected speech. It has two parts, a subject and a predicate. The subject is the part of a sentence which represents the person or thing of which something is said. The predicate is the part which expresses what is said of this person or thing. The subject therefore is naturally the name of a person or thing, or will contain a name with other modifying words. The predicate must contain

a word which has the power of asserting or stating something. The verb, therefore, is an essential element of every sentence. The introduction of the ideas *Sentence*, *Subject* and *Predicate*, *Noun* and *Verb* at the beginning of grammatical study is now considered needful by the best grammarians.

In logic a sentence is also called a *proposition*, and the thought expressed by a sentence or proposition is shown to be the comparison of two ideas, whose agreement or non-agreement is expressed by a connecting term called the *copula*, as

The apple—is—red.

The apple—is not—red.

A sentence, therefore, has logically three inherent elements, the subject, copula, and predicate term or attribute. There is much difference of opinion among scholars whether the recognition of two parts in the predicate—*i. e.*, the copula and attribute,—is needful in grammar. These ideas are much harder to grasp than those of subject and predicate. Students of logic have usually contended that the copula and predicate term must be recognized in every sentence. Other students, looking wholly from the grammatical side, and seeing how few are the cases in which the copula is really distinct from the idea to be predicated, have declared the distinction to be not only needless but false, and have spoken slightly of the “pretended copula of the sentence.” Thus John Stuart Mill tells us that “It is of the utmost importance

that there should be no under-estimation in our conception of the nature and office of the copula"; while other writers have declared with equal vehemence that the theory of two parts in every predicate is irrational and untenable.

Logic and grammar cannot really be antagonistic in their views of the nature of the sentence. Yet for the grammatical understanding of most sentences the attempt to separate copula from attribute is not essential, and for young students it may even be objectionable. There are some sentences, however, such as "God is good," "Washington was made President," which cannot be grammatically studied without recognizing the distinct offices of the two parts of the predicate. Unless the true view of this class of sentences is gained early in the course in grammar, many predicate constructions will fail to be understood. It is perhaps only the predicates containing copulative verbs which the ordinary grammar student needs to consider as composed of copula and attribute. Yet with advanced students the thought should be carried farther.

The logical idea that in every predicate, whatever the form, there is always an idea to be predicated, and an assertive element which may or may not be distinct from the former, is certainly an illuminative one and will aid in the interpretation of many otherwise difficult predicate constructions.

Although the general plan of the sentence requires early attention in grammar, the complete study of

sentences, including the clauses and phrases which compose them, cannot be fully undertaken until a knowledge of the parts of speech throws light upon the sentence relations of these larger component elements.

## VIII

### PARTS OF SPEECH

"The chief result of grammar . . . . is the doctrine of the parts of speech."

The mind proceeds from the whole to its parts and their relations. This is the logical order; that is, the order according to the laws of thought. This gives scientific knowledge.—BOYDEN.

We need not inquire what a word *is*, but we must ask what it *does*.—MEIKLEJOHN.

The defining of parts of speech is a serious office. The whole future of grammar rests upon the classifying of words according to their function in the sentence.—BAIN.

To be a noun or verb or adjective is a function which a word discharges in such and such a context, and not a character innate in the word and inseparable from it.—EARLE.

A firm and consistent application of the principle that the part of speech is determined by *use* and not by *form*, will do more than any other one thing to simplify English grammar.—HARPER AND BURGESS.

The classifying of words as parts of speech is largely artificial.—CARPENTER.

The fundamental parts of speech are four in number—substantives, predicatives, modifiers, and connectives.—DAVENPORT AND EMERSON.

Parts of speech sometimes shade off into one another so subtly that we can no more distinguish them than we can distinguish the colors of the rainbow.—SNODDY.

Not to this day has it been settled what sort of a difference in words shall entitle them to a separate rank as parts of speech.—HORNE TOOKE.

The number and character of these recognized classes of words have varied at different eras. The earliest Greek grammarians named a few parts of speech which attracted emphatic attention, and others were added later. At last Dionysius carried “eight parts of speech” from Alexandria to Rome, and from that day to this the mystic number eight has been perpetuated.

Yet the claimants to a place in the list have varied. The participle, included by Dionysius, was afterwards added to the verb. The Greeks, wiser than we, omitted the interjection, which indeed is not a part of speech, but a “whole speech,” though vague and undeveloped. The infinitive has sometimes been called a part of speech. Pronouns have sometimes been classed with nouns; and again the personal pronouns have been treated as a part of speech distinct from adjective pronouns, which were classed with adjectives or articles. Lily’s grammar (known as the grammar of King Henry the Eighth) included the adjectives with the noun, declaring “In speech be there eight parts following: noun, pronoun, verb, participle, declined; adverb, conjunction, preposition, interjection, undeclined.” This was also the platform of some of the old Latin grammarians, though others maintained that the adjective ought not to be called a noun. Numerals have sometimes been considered

one part of speech. The articles have often been so treated. Murray's old grammar does this, thus giving to English nine parts of speech, or one more than belong to Latin, which has no article.

Not a few of the ancient grammarians divided words into three classes, which, according to Vossius, were nouns, verbs, and particles. This view also found advocates among the early English grammarians, who seem to have supposed that grammar would be rendered easier by reducing the number of the parts of speech. Murray's reply to this view, however, was as follows: "Every word in the language must be included in some class and nothing is gained by making the classes larger and less numerous. In all the artificial arrangements of science, distinctions are to be made according to the differences in things, and the simple question here is what differences among words shall be at first regarded. To overlook in our primary division the difference between a verb and a participle is merely to reserve for a sub-division or subsequent explanation a species of words which most grammarians have recognized as a distinct sort." Recent grammarians have pointed out that whatever be the number of classes recognized, they are reducible to four main types, substantives, verbs, modifiers, and connectives.

The diversity which has prevailed is shown by a curious dialogue in the *Diversions of Purley*, by John Horne Tooke. One of the characters is made to say, "You have not informed me how many parts

of speech you intend to lay down." The reply is, "That shall be as you please, either two to twenty or more." In Noah Webster's grammar of 1790, he says that eight is the best number of parts of speech that can be found. Yet in another of his grammars, he reduces the number to six, following the example of Lowth and others, who class adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions together under the common name of abbreviations or particles. Horne Tooke tells us, however, that "Particles is a convenient name for all the little words that we do not exactly understand."

The number and names of the parts of speech have at last crystallized into the eight that our grammars generally recognize, and perhaps this list is as convenient as can be made; though several of the most distinctive sub-classes, such as participles, infinitives, articles, and the different classes of pronouns, need to be taught early in the grammar course and with nearly as much distinctness as the fundamental eight classes.

When all these are clearly known, and the student is able to assign each word of a sentence to its proper part of speech, the stronghold of grammar as a science may be said to have been conquered. In thus assigning words to their parts of speech it will be noticed that the nouns and verbs of a language are practically numberless; adjectives and adverbs of quality are also numerous, and their number is often increased by new word formations; but articles, pronouns of various classes, auxiliary verbs, modal adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions are limited classes, seldom

added to but constantly repeated as the connective and filling-in material of all sentences.

The basis of the classification of parts of speech is the function which the word performs in the structure of the sentence. For this reason there can be no logical definition of any part of speech, except by giving its function. The old definition of a verb as "a word which means to be, to do, or to suffer," ignored wholly this functional element. In teaching that "a noun is a name," the student should not omit to notice the fact that this gives to the noun the grammatical quality which admits of its being the subject term of a sentence.

But the quality of belonging to a part of speech in English is a very variable one. It is more a habit of the word than a fixed and innate quality. In a highly inflected language like Latin, the word is ticketed, as it were, by its form as belonging to a given part of speech. In the newly invented language Esperanto, the part of speech is shown by the termination of the word. But in English it is the sense of the sentence that must decide, and there are only a comparatively small number of words that belong always to the same part of speech. The pronouns are the most habit-bound among our words, but with some of these there is variation.

For these reasons it is even more true in English than in some other languages that the sentence and not the word must be regarded as the primary unit of form as well as of thought. This fact receives added

emphasis from the name which has been given to these grammatical groups of words. Standing alone a word is incomplete and its meaning is uncertain. It is only by the right connection of the "parts" that we can get the whole, which we call "speech."

## IX

### THE VERBAL ELEMENT OF THE SENTENCE

The apparently simple question "What is a verb?" has been from of old the subject of the most ferocious controversies.—HORNE TOOKE.

The verbal notion as such is nothing but a copula.—TRANSLATED FROM GRAMMATIK VON CONRAD HERMANN.

Every verb admits of being taken apart or analyzed into some form of the copula *be*, which expresses the act of assertion, and a predicate noun or adjective (especially the verbal adjective, the present participle) expressing the condition or quality or action predicated.—WHITNEY.

The definition of the verb (as the word which asserts) does not provide for interrogative or imperative sentences. Indeed it is probably impossible to define the verb briefly and clearly, so as to include such sentences. The interrogative and imperative forms, however, may be so easily changed into declarative that this definition will not be found seriously inadequate.—HARPER AND BURGESS.

The verb makes the speaker responsible. If we say "The boy" we utter merely a name. But the minute we add a verb to the name, as, "The boy lies," we are held responsible for a statement.—LEWIS.

We cannot assert or deny without a finite verb.—BAIN.

It is a quaint saying of that quaint, and yet wise, people, the Chinese, that verbs alone are living words.—M. SCHELE DE VERE.

The distinction shown to the verb in giving it a name that means *the word* of the sentence, seems to require that its definition should make plain its superiority as a sentence element. Yet the statement of many grammars that the verb is "a word which expresses being, action, or state," misses the essential fact. In some of the older grammars we read that "the verb is a word that signifies to do, to be, or to suffer," and that "it may be distinguished by its making sense with one of the personal pronouns or the word *to* before it." Such statements are inadequate as definitions of the verb.

Among ancient grammarians the tense variations attracted attention as one of the most distinguishing features. So Aristotle defined a verb as a word that can express *time*. For a similar reason the common German word for verb is *Zeit-wort*, or "*time-word*." Some grammarians have thought the power to denote action the most conspicuous feature and have given names expressive of the idea of "*deed-word*." A truer thought than any of these, however, is expressed by Madvig, the German author of a celebrated Latin grammar, who designates the verb by a word meaning "*outsayings-word*," because it "*outsays, asserts, or delivers the judgment of the mind*."

The force of this definition is best shown by the logical rather than the grammatical view of the sentence. This is, that the ideas expressed by the subject and predicate terms in every sentence are brought into comparison and the mind asserts or denies the agree-

ment of these ideas. The word which expresses this mental decision is the *copula*, or true verb. It is the assertive element in every sentence and the presence of this assertive power in any word is the only thing that gives it a true verbal character. In any simple sentence there is only one word in which this assertive power is lodged. A verb may be logically defined, therefore, as the word which is the copula, or which contains the copula of the judgment.

When the verb *be* is used to express an unchangeable or a general truth, it is a pure copula. In the sentences, "God is good," "A triangle is a plane figure," we find the copula stripped of all extraneous ideas and standing alone as the verb of the sentence.

Yet the verbal element is seldom found thus in its naked simplicity. The idea to be predicated has many ways in which it can unite itself with the copulative element. There are also many accessory ideas of mood, tense, etc., to be conveyed, so that the verbal element is frequently almost lost sight of in the host of related ideas with which it is attended. In the sentence, "He sings," the verb contains not only the assertive element, but it expresses the action to be predicated as well, with the accessory ideas of time, and the person and number of the subject.

But although the student of advanced grammar should recognize the essentially copulative character of the verbal office, the idea that the verb is an "asserting" or "stating" word will be sufficient for elementary classes. Even the youngest students can recognize the

word in the predicate whose omission would remove all power of assertion from the sentence.

The objection has been raised that to define a verb as "a word which asserts or states something about a person or thing," is not logical, since in the interrogatory or imperative sentence no assertion is made. As a substitute for the assertive idea, some grammarians have proposed the definition, "A verb is a word which when placed with a subject can form a sentence." But this transfers the difficulty of definition to the word *sentence*. It also excludes the copula *is* and all copulative and transitive verbs, which cannot form a sentence without the aid of an attribute or object following. The seeming impossibility of defining the "verb," without falling back on the logical rather than the grammatical view of the sentence, is an illustration of the difficulties that are often encountered in forming accurate, and at the same time simple, definitions of grammatical terms.

In the verb-phrases which constitute the great majority of our English verbal forms, it is the first word alone which has a true verbal character. All the other words are participles and infinitives, which although derived from verbs are grammatically of a different nature. In the sentence "The house might have been burned," the assertive element is wholly within the word *might*. The predicate idea, however, is distributed throughout the verb-phrase, though centered principally in the participle *burned*.

The logical relations of the words of the predicate

are often difficult to deal with. Yet these difficulties are greatly reduced if the true character of the verb is clearly understood.

# X

## VERB COMPLEMENTS

The thought imposes its form upon the sentence.—WISELY

Complements which *must* be added to make the predicate complete are to be carefully distinguished from words that *may* be added to make the meaning more precise.—BUEHLER.

Now, my dear James, if I have succeeded in making clear to you the *principle* out of which the use of these words . . . has arisen, I have accomplished a good deal.—COBBETT'S GRAMMAR (1818).

The three fundamental types of predicate construction may be illustrated as follows:

1. Dogs bark.
2. The child seems happy.
3. John has cut his finger.

In the first all the essential elements of the predicate are in the verb itself. Other words may be added but they are simply modifiers and not necessary to the sentence construction.

In the second and third sentences the verbs cannot be used as predicates without the completing word or "complement"; such verbs are sometimes loosely classed together as "verbs of incomplete predication." But the two types differ essentially both in the character of the verb itself and in the nature and relations of the complement.

In the second sentence the verb "seems," though not without some attributive idea, is chiefly a connective or copula for the outside attribute "happy." Such a verb is called a "copulative verb," and the verbs which are most frequently used in copulative relations are be, become, seem, appear, taste, smell, look, feel, and a few others. There are also a large number of passive verb phrases which (although they contain in themselves a kind of copula and attribute) are yet used as copulas for an outside term which is the real attribute of the sentence. Such are "is made," "is chosen," "is thought," etc., as, "Washington was elected President of the United States."

Attribute complements are of many kinds. Nouns, pronouns, adjectives, participles, infinitive phrases, and clauses, may all be used in this relation, as follows:

He is a *man*.

This is *he*.

She seems *happy*.

He was greatly *admired*.

This is *to be deplored*.

The fact is *that it is impossible*.

The attribute complement is always subjective in character. If it is a noun or pronoun it means the same thing as the subject. If it is an adjective, it expresses a quality or attribute of this thing.

In the first and third types of predicate, the verbs *bark* and *has cut* alike contain the copula and the chief part of the idea to be predicated. But *bark* is a complete verb. *Has cut* differs from *bark* in being also

*transitive*; that is, it expresses an action which is carried over from the doer to a passive recipient that must also be named in order that the meaning shall be complete.

Some grammarians distinguish between a "true intransitive verb," by which they mean one that *never* takes an object, and a "transitive verb used absolutely;" that is, one usually transitive but used in a given case without an object. But grammatical classification is according to the function of a word in the sentence where it occurs. The omission of the object changes slightly the character of the verb itself, making it more general in meaning. It seems most logical to follow the classification made by those grammarians who would call all the verbs intransitive in such a sentence as "The man eats, laughs, and sleeps." A verb usually intransitive may also be made transitive with an object of kindred signification called the "cognate object," as "He laughed a loud laugh."

The complement of a transitive verb is always objective in character. After a reflexive verb, as "I hurt myself," it means the same thing as the subject, but this is still thought of as outside and objective. The object complement ranks higher than the adverbial modifier since it is necessary to the predicate construction.

All verb complements belong to the basic part of the sentence. The subject, verb, and complement are all needed to make the sentence structure complete.

Object complements as well as attributes, vary greatly, and the different types of objects will be considered later.

Both object and attribute complements offer many stumbling blocks to beginners in grammar. But if the three essential types of predicate construction are thoroughly mastered early in the course, many of the difficulties of grammatical analysis will already have been conquered.

## XI

### THE OBJECTIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

Many verbs take two substantives; the proper object, or the accusative, and an object of reference to which the action is directed, or the dative.—TRANSLATED FROM MADVIG'S *LATIN GRAMMAR*.

The dative denotes in general the person or thing more remotely connected with an action.—TRANSLATED FROM CURTIUS's *GREEK GRAMMAR*.

There is hardly anything more interesting than to see how the laws of grammar, which seem at first sight so hard and arbitrary, are simply the laws of the expression of logical relations in concrete form.—EVERETT.

The word *object* in grammar has many varieties of technical meaning.

The noun or pronoun that completes the meaning of a transitive verb by naming the receiver of the action is the object of the verb. Participles and infinitives share with verbs the power to take objects. Objects are the most important verb modifiers. They belong to the basic part of the predicate.

The term *object* also is applied to a noun or pronoun connected by a preposition as a subordinate to some other word. Objects of verbs and objects of prepositions are alike in one respect—they must be in the objective (*i. e.* the accusative) case if the word used has such a case. Both of these kinds of objects are easy to recog-

nize. But there are related constructions that are more difficult.

There is the indirect or "dative" object, as "I give *you* my hand." It has many subtle marks which may or may not all be present in a given case.

If the indirect object follows the direct, it requires the preposition *to*, or *for*, as "I give my hand *to you*." In a few cases the preposition is required even when the indirect object precedes the direct, as "I accepted *for you* the invitation."

The direct and indirect objects are sometimes spoken of as the primary and secondary objects of the verb. In, "They sent him a book," *book* is directly related to the verb, but the relation of *him* is rather to the whole predicate; that is, the *sending of the book* was to *him*.

The indirect object usually denotes a *person*, while the direct object usually means a *thing*. The indirect object is not always a personal word however, as,

Give thy thoughts no tongue.—SHAKESPEARE.

There are also cases in which the object denoting the person is nearly direct, and the one meaning the thing becomes indirect (or nearly adverbial) with the preposition *of*. Thus, "They told me the circumstances," by a slight change becomes "They told me *of the circumstances*." If either of the two objects is used without the other it is direct, as, "I paid John wages." "I paid John." "I paid wages." But in most instances the indirect object could not be used without the other.

The indirect object in Latin and some other languages takes the dative case, and this was formerly true in English, but in modern English the objective case covers both the accusative and dative uses. The verbs *ask*, *teach* and a few others in Latin give the accusative form to the object denoting the person as well as to that denoting the thing. For this reason, Kimball's grammar and a few others call both objects after *teach* direct in English as well as in Latin, saying also that *teach* has a different meaning with the two objects. Yet there is little in English to distinguish the two objects after *teach* from the usual construction of direct and indirect objects. It is true that in comparing the two sentences, "He taught John the lesson," and "He gave John a book" we feel that the thought relation of *John* to the verb is closer in the first sentence than in the second. Yet in the first sentence *John* and *lesson* are not coordinate objects, nor equal in their relations to *taught*. The object denoting the *person* after *teach* has a measure of indirectness in English, even though in Latin such a word would take the accusative case.

The truth seems to be that there are many degrees of indirectness in the objective relation of a noun. The indirect object may be thought of as an intermediate construction shading all the way from an object that is nearly direct to one which is scarcely different from an adverbial phrase, so that it is sometimes difficult to see precisely where the line should be drawn on either side.

An indirect object can follow a passive verb, the noun that would be the direct object of the active voice being

made the subject, as, "An apple was given me." In the case of a few verbs the indirect object can also be made the subject of the passive voice, while the direct object remains as a "retained object," after the verb, as "I was given an apple." This construction is peculiar to English, and even in English it is not usually so good as the regular form of the passive sentence. The use of the indirect object as the subject of the passive seems to have come into English through the medium of such verbs as *ask*, *teach*, etc., which in Latin and other languages take two accusatives. But the usage has extended itself to a few other verbs as well.

A pronoun is sometimes added to a verb as an indirect expletive object, referring to some person that may be supposed to be interested in the action, as,

He kills me six or seven dozen Scots at a breakfast.

He claps you an iron cap on head.—CARLYLE.

This construction was common in early English.

There is another important kind of objective construction that is unfortunately known by many names, among which are *factitive object*, and *objective complement*, *predicate* or *attribute*. The *factitive object* follows a direct object and sustains to it an attributive or predicate relation, so that both parts are necessary to complete the meaning of the verb. The name *double object* has sometimes been given to the direct object with this complementary (or attributive) objective term. This *factitive object* (or objective attribute, predicate, etc.) may be a noun or pronoun, an adjective, a participle,

an infinitive, or an infinitive copula followed by an adjective or noun.

Examples:

They made him *captain*.

They thought him *wise*.

They saw him *running*.

They asked him *to stay*.

They begged him *to be merciful*.

In changing a sentence containing an objective attribute to the passive voice the verb becomes a copulative phrase, the direct object is made the subject and the objective attribute becomes the attribute of the sentence, as

He was made *captain*.

In such sentences as "They begged him to be merciful," *him* is in a sense (and is often called) the subject of the following infinitive, but it is its relation to *begged* rather than to the infinitive that determines its case form.

The sentence "They asked him to stay" is not very different from "They asked him a favor." The line between the construction of direct and indirect object, and that of objective attribute is not always very distinct.

The objective attribute may be thought of as filling out the meaning of a transitive verb which is not of itself able to express fully the action performed on its object. Thus, "Ice keeps the water cool"—*i. e.* "Ice keeps cool the water."

The objective constructions present many difficulties

to students of English. But if the main types are well understood a careful comparison with these types will usually show clearly to which class a given construction belongs.

## XII

### SUBJECT AND PREDICATE NOUNS

Position does by no means necessarily conform to the order of thought.—WELSH.

Welcome from the student the widest range of interpretation of the sentence under examination. The syntax may often assume several different aspects as the thought is capable of being conceived in different shades of meaning.  
—DAVENPORT AND EMERSON.

It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the subject and predicate nouns of a sentence. Such a case seldom occurs, however, except in interrogative and inverted sentences, or where a rhetorical element prevails.

In a purely definitive sentence the predicate noun has the relation of a genus to the species named by the subject, as "Dogs are intelligent animals." In many other cases the subject represents an individual and the predicate term shows the species to which it belongs, as "Caesar is a dog." In all such sentences the predicate noun has a meaning which is wider in its extent than that of the subject, and the two are clearly differentiated.

But there are cases where the two terms are equally specific or equally generic, and therefore of equal extent in their meaning, as "A mirror is a looking-glass."

In such cases the presumption would naturally be in favor of making the first term the subject. Yet in poetical or highly rhetorical sentences there is sometimes a chance for difference of opinion.

The general principle to be applied seems to be that the subject represents an idea in the speaker's mind that is supposed to be unknown to the hearer or regarding which some unknown fact is to be communicated. In "The wages of sin is death," is the speaker trying to show what constitutes *death*, or is it *the wages of sin* whose character is to be revealed? If the latter, then *wages of sin*, being the unknown term, is the subject of the sentence.

An interrogative pronoun which introduces a question may stand either as the subject or the predicate term.

Who will be our messenger?

James will be our messenger.

Who was Plato?

Plato was a Greek philosopher.

The answers to these questions show that *who* is the subject in the first interrogative sentence, but the predicate term in the second.

But there are sentences in literature in which either term might be construed as subject, though the thought would differ slightly in the two cases. In "Alfred Austin is the Poet Laureate," a change in emphasis would change the relation of the subject and predicate terms.

A similar ambiguity between the subject and the object of a verb sometimes occurs. An inversion which places the object in advance is sometimes admissible. Yet (especially if both words are nouns) it may create an uncertainty as to the true relations. In the words of Professor Bain, "It is by this construction that we can practice oracular ambiguity, as 'The duke yet lives that Henry shall depose.' "

Several years ago the New England *Journal of Education* published an article by Paul Standish, giving the opinions of noted persons as to the subject and object in a well-known line of Gray's Elegy:

And all the air a solemn stillness holds.

In presenting the question to his readers, the writer says, "Don't be too positive in your reply. Wiser heads than ours differ in their opinion, and always will. If you are sure now that it is *air* that holds the stillness, the probability is that in five minutes you will be inclined to believe that it is *stillness* that holds the air and you are liable to get into a frame of mind where you have no opinion whatever on the subject."

Of seventy-six replies to this question from high authorities in the educational and literary world, thirty-nine favored *stillness*, twenty-six favored *air*, and eleven were in doubt. One noted Massachusetts judge after expressing a positive opinion, added:

"P. S.—On further reflection I am on the fence."

Such instances as these may well remind the grammarian not to be over positive in his opinion. Both

interpretations may sometimes be correct. Many a writer has written sentences of larger import than he himself knew in penning them. In the discussion of the subtler questions of syntax, it is not the decision reached that is of chief importance. It is the power of thinking gained by the effort to compare and discriminate the relations of a thought that is of truest educational value.

## XIII

### INFLECTIONS

The old wealth of forms is now thrown aside as a dispensable burden.—SCHLEICHER.

“The exhibition of the system of English inflection must constitute the main part of an English grammar. But we are not to import unreal distinctions out of a foreign tongue or theoretical distinctions out of a system of logic.”

How bare—whether too bare is another question—we have stripped ourselves.—TRENCH.

The English, which from the mode of its formation by a mixture of different tongues, has been stripped of its grammatical inflections more completely than any other European language, seems nevertheless, even to a foreigner, to be distinguished by energetic eloquence. . . . . Yet it cannot be overlooked that this copiousness of grammatical forms [in Greek] and the fine shades of meaning which they express, evince a nicety of observation and a faculty of distinguishing which unquestionably prove that the race of mankind among whom these arose was characterized by a remarkable correctness and subtlety of thought. . . . In the ancient languages the words with their inflections, clothed as it were with muscles and sinews, come forward like living bodies full of expression and character, while in the modern tongues the words seem shrunk up into mere skeletons.—OTFRIED MÜLLER'S LITERATURE OF GREECE.

The chief ideas now expressed by English inflection are seven: number, person, time, comparison, ownership, the

subject relation and the object relation. No one word contains all these ideas.—LEWIS.

The most elaborate system of inflection still leaves something unexpressed.—BAIN.

The Anglo-Saxon, which is the basis of the English tongue, was a highly inflected language. But the Norman Conquest, besides bringing into English a large vocabulary of new words, inaugurated the long process by which the structure of the language itself was radically changed.

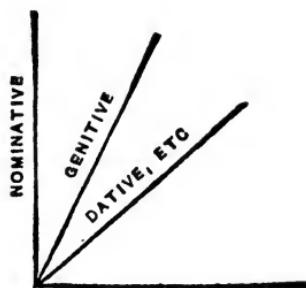
It has been said that “A French family settled in England and edited the English language.” Perhaps the truer statement would be that the Normans found it too much trouble to learn the Saxon inflections and so ignored them. At any rate most of the old Saxon terminations gradually disappeared, and with these some of the “governments and agreements” that depend upon inflection disappeared also. By the end of the fourteenth century the process was nearly completed, and the invention of printing during the following century established the general fixity of forms that has prevailed since that era.

Inflection is the general name for all grammatical changes in the forms of words. These changes are produced as a rule by adding various terminations to the stem or root; but changes within the words, as *mouse* plural *mice*, are also called inflections.

Inflectional phenomena are of two kinds, living and dead. Certain inflections have become fixed for specific words, but are no longer used in making new forms

as, *who*, *whose*, *whom*. Others are freely used to make forms of new words after a prescribed pattern as the plural in *s*, or past tenses in *ed*.

The name *Declension* has been given to a tabulated statement of the inflectional forms of a substantive. The word comes from a fanciful device, that seems almost childish to modern minds, in which an upright line represented the nominative case, and declining lines the other cases, as



A summary of the inflectional forms of a verb is called its "conjugation." There is very little of conjugation belonging to modern English verbs.

The name of each specific inflection, as *person*, *case*, *mood*, etc., has had a somewhat indeterminate value in grammatical usage, and has been variously defined as a *form*, *property*, *distinction*, *condition*, etc. That there is some inherent reason for this lack of unity in definition must be acknowledged. Some of the so-called inflections seem to extend themselves to cover subtle relations where the true inflection is wanting. It need not be thought strange that there has been wide divers-

ity among grammarians regarding the treatment of the inflections.

But the sensible way of dealing with the subject is that which is adopted by most modern text-books. *Case, number, mood, etc.*, are regarded as genuine inflections, that is, as true grammatical changes in the forms of words themselves. Only such are named as are really to be found in English words. The student should be an investigator in this field, searching for all the traces of these inflectional forms which he can find. Yet, as he discovers certain "agreements" where the form of the governing word is non-committal, the idea of a subtle property that goes beyond the formal inflection is awakened in his mind.

A knowledge of Latin, or some other inflected language, though not a substitute for the English study, is of great help here. As the student grasps the larger knowledge which historical and comparative grammar can throw upon these questions, the remnants of the English inflections gain a wider interest and are apprehended with truer value.

## XIV

### GOVERNMENT AND AGREEMENT

The repetition of the inflection of a head-word in its adjunct-word is called concord, and the words are said to agree in whatever grammatical form they have in common.—**SWEET.**

Rules are the elastic expression of the custom of a language.  
—*Independent.*

Rules have been laid down which never had any existence outside of the minds of the grammarians and verbal critics.  
—**LOUNSBURY.**

Concord is not a necessity of language; while in the degree that it prevails in Latin and in Greek, it is a serious incumbrance.—**BAIN.**

The verb needs not, and generally does not, agree with its nominative case in number and person,—active verbs do not govern the objective case or any other,—prepositions do not govern the objective case or any other.—**RICHARD GRANT WHITE.**

To parse agreement whenever a distinct form of the verb marks a particular number (as in *are* and *were*) or whenever a distinct form marks a particular person and number (as in *am*, *is*, and *loves*) and to say nothing about agreement when there is no such distinct form,—is the simple rule that we would urge upon teachers.—**TOLMAN.**

A verb must not *disagree* with its subject in number and person.—**LEWIS.**

In an abridgment of Murray's grammar that was

extensively used in the earlier half of the nineteenth century, after the twenty-one rules of syntax, with their numerous notes and exceptions, we find a "Synopsis of Syntax" divided into the two sections of "Concord" and "Government."

Under "Concord" are given rules showing that articles, substantives, adjectives, pronouns, and verbs have "agreement" with other words to which they relate.

Under "Government" it is shown that substantives, adjectives, pronouns, verbs, participles, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections—all of the parts of speech, in fact, except adverbs—may govern other words.

Doubtless all of these rules have an element of truth in them. The first rule under "Concord" states that "Articles agree with nouns in number," which seems to be a large generalization from the fact that *a* or *an* because of its meaning, belongs always to a singular noun.

Another rule states that "Adjectives and adjective pronouns generally agree in number with the substantives to which they belong"; which is also a very comprehensive statement, for the fact that *this* and *that* have plural forms; and that *few*, *several*, *many*, and some other adjectives because of their meaning belong to plural nouns, while *each* and *every* belong to singular nouns. But the modern grammarian feels that it would be better to state the specific fact in relation to these words, than to try to cover these individual points by a universal statement.

That the English language has something of government and agreement should be made clear. In the sentences, "The man laughs," "The men laugh," the noun "governs" the number and person of the verb, and conversely the verb "agrees" with its subject. Full recognition of all such facts should be given in grammar.

The facts of government that can be stated as principles are these:

A copula takes the same case after it as before it. In the case of a finite verb this will be the nominative; in infinitive phrases it is objective.

Transitive verbs and prepositions "govern" the objective case.

An antecedent governs the number, person, and gender of the following pronoun, and a subject governs its verb in number and person.

Conversely, the facts of concord are these:

Verbs agree with subjects in person and number, and pronouns agree with their antecedents in number and gender. An attribute complement (except in impersonal sentences such as "It is they") agrees with its subject in number, gender, and case.

But while each of the foregoing statements is sometimes true, it is only applicable when the word to be governed has the requisite properties that make it governable, and in modern English these occasions are so rare that they are the exception rather than the rule of the language.

The older English had far more of government and

agreement than modern English has. Latin and Greek and the modern European languages also have more. The relations of words in Latin are shown by these agreements, but in English the logical relations are discovered by other means than word forms. Arrangement and emphasis have large, though subtle, effects in fixing these word relations.

We must still recognize "concord" and "government" as facts of the English language. But we may wisely forbear to use so large a mould for holding our grammatical truths as the rules of agreement in the older grammars.

## XV

### PERSON

Person is the foundation of the conception of the pronoun. It can only be *attributed* to nouns, of which it is no proper function. It belongs to verbs only by transfer from pronouns, the personal endings of the verbs being all originally affixed pronouns.—JOYNES.

The want of the so-called verbal inflections for number and person can hardly be considered an imperfection in the English language; for inflection, though it may reduce the number of words, gives us no greater precision, but, on the contrary, less force in these respects than may be obtained by the use of auxiliary pronouns and other determinatives.

—MARSH.

It is no real wealth to a language to have needless and superfluous forms.—TRENCH.

In an abridgment of Murray's Grammar in common use in the earlier half of the century, the subject of grammatical person is briefly treated as follows: "*I* is the first person. *Thou* is the second person. *He*, *she*, or *it* is the third person."

This little text-book of a past generation has some elaborations which seem to darken counsel by an excess of grammatical illumination. But in the simplicity of its treatment of person, we believe that it might point a moral for some modern grammarians who wrestle with the disputed question whether per-

son is an "accident," a "distinction," a "property," an "inflection," or a what-not of certain parts of speech.

After all, what is there of person in English besides the name of a small class of pronouns, and a few verbal forms which agree with these pronouns?

We might add that since the third person of the verb is also used with noun subjects and with the indeclinable pronouns, there is a remote sense in which these words also may be accredited with something of grammatical person.

The three persons of the pronoun are not really an inflection of a part of speech. They are distinct words with which this personal idea is associated. The only inflection of person that exists in English is the small remnant that is found in verbs. There are two forms for the third person singular in the present tense, —a modern form ending in *s*, and an ancient one in *th* or *eth*. There is also a second person singular used with the subject *thou* in all tenses. Though too archaic for common use, this is still the approved form for prayer and for poetry, and should be thoroughly familiar.

The verb *be* has more of person than other verbs; yet the number of its personal forms is not large. They are very important, however, as they are in constant use both as principal verbs and as auxiliaries.

The syntax of the subject of person is chiefly contained in the following rule: "A verb and its subject must agree in person and in number, when both have

the requisite person and number." The rule is an important and rigid one, but its applications are comparatively few, as verbs seldom have "the requisite person and number."

There is another rule of syntax (or perhaps of politeness) less important than the other, which assigns the following order of precedence to the grammatical persons in compound phrases:—

You, and he, and I.

There is also a principle of agreement in case of a compound antecedent, which is illustrated by the following sentences:—

You and I will take *our* books.

You and he will take *your* books.

But the inflection and syntax of grammatical person is a short subject if we do not weigh it down by unnecessary rules and definitions.

## XVI

### NUMBER

To Singular Nouns we always add an (s)  
When we the Plural Number wou'd express;  
Or (es) for more delightful easie sound  
Whene'er the Singular to end is found  
In (x) or (z) (ch) (sh) or (s)  
(Ce) (ge) when they their softer sound express.

—SIR RICHARD STEELE'S GRAMMAR, 1712, DEDICATED TO  
THE QUEEN.

As there is a common gender so there ought to have been  
a common or neutral number.—BAIN.

"Grammatical phenomena are of two kinds, living and dead. The living are still freely used to form new inflected and derived words on the pattern of those already existing, —as the plural s."

English like most other languages has two numbers, the singular which expresses one-ness (or else leaves the number indefinite, as "The lion is the King of beasts") and the plural which expresses more-than-one-ness. A few languages have also a dual number expressing two-ness, and this was true of Old English. In languages having a dual number the plural expresses more-than-two-ness. Thus in Old English the plural *we* implied at least three persons, "we-two" being expressed by an ancient dual form "wit." A remnant of the old English dual number is found in the word

*twain* and its contracted form *twin*, the latter having a newly formed plural *twins*. Another trace of the distinction between dual and plural is found in the reciprocal pronoun phrases "each other" and "one another."

Number is the most widely extended of all the inflections. It belongs to most nouns, to the personal pronouns, to some verbal forms, and to the adjectives *this* and *that*. This range does not seem very large, however, and beyond this we look in vain for the grammatical inflection of number.

The regular plurals in English now end in *s*. To conform to certain laws of spelling or of euphony the termination is often *es*, as, ladies, taxes. After *x*, *sh*, *ch*, *s*, and other sibilant sounds this must be pronounced as a separate syllable.

The so-called irregular plurals are mostly survivals of old Saxon regular forms. They are not to be thought of as defects but should be explained and classified. There are the strong plurals formed by an internal change, as *teeth*, *mice*. These were formerly more numerous than at present. Another form of Saxon plural is found in *oxen*. Some plurals in *n* that were formerly in use may still be heard in some parts of England and Scotland, as *hosen*, *shoon*.

A few forms show the results of mixed processes, as *children*, *brethren*. Thus *child* had an old plural *chilfer*, and the present form combines this with the plural inflection in *n*.

Notwithstanding its larger extent, number seems,

at first thought, to be the simplest of the inflections. Certainly, the main rule for plurals of nouns is easy to be understood and can be learned by children at an early age. Yet when the specific and exceptional rules have also been mastered, the teacher may well feel that a large territory has been covered. There are nouns ending in *y*, *o*, *f*, and *fe* to be considered. There are old English plurals, and foreign plurals, nouns with two plurals and with no plurals, nouns which are compound words, and those consisting of a title and a name together, all of these requiring special treatment.

Among the nouns ending in *f*, it will be noticed that those that retain the *f* in the plural are mostly Norman French, as *chiefs*, while those that have *ves* are Saxon in origin, as *wives*. *Beef*, however, is an exception. Its plural *beees* suggests an analogy with the Latin *boves*.

*News* and *tidings*, now singular, were originally treated as plurals. Thus Roger Ascham wrote (1550) "There are many news." *Wages*, *dregs*, *pains*, *ashes* and other words have all been treated in both ways. A large class of plurals is made up of the names of pairs, as *tongs*, *reins*, *snuffers*, etc. These are sometimes called *false plurals*. It is often well to use the word *pair* with these and give the phrase its true singular construction as, "A pair of scissors."

Many foreign words introduced into English have brought their plurals with them, as *phenomena*, *joci*. The grammar student should classify these foreign plurals according to the principles of the languages from which they come.

But it is no part of the purpose of this book to set forth specifically the irregularities of English number. These are included in every text-book in grammar and are discussed minutely in the orthographic chapters of the dictionaries. The subject is an important one, but the forms are to be learned chiefly in the constructive lessons of elementary language teaching rather than as a part of the science of grammar.

After the study of number forms, comes the syntax of number. Verbs must be kept in proper agreement, with special attention given to cases where the subject is a collective noun, or is accompanied by a modifier. The agreement of the pronoun with its antecedent requires careful consideration, especially when the possessive forms are used, as "Each of them took *his* books."

In some instances the number form of the verb is determined by the general sense to be conveyed, rather than by the number form of the subject, as "Bread and milk is good food for children." This is especially true when a collective noun is limited by a following phrase, as "A large number of the men were disappointed."

There are many words and phrases that contain a hovering sense of either singular or plural, so that personal judgment is sometimes a factor in determining the form to be used, as "Already a train or two (has? have?) come in." But such questions should usually be avoided by a change in construction.

Many passages in literature might be quoted in which the number agreement is different from that

which modern English requires, as “How many numbers is in nouns? Two.”—Shakespeare.

Shall we say “Twice two are four,” or “is four?” Is “Measles are prevalent,” or “is prevalent,” the correct form of speech? These and kindred questions are often presented to the grammarian, who sometimes has to fling himself free from the tendency to hair-splitting and belittling discussions, and enter larger fields of linguistic thought.

What is the plural of *tailor's goose*? Is it *geese* or *gooses*? This is an example of a class of grammatical questions that are often asked. The story is told of a tailor who avoided the question by writing his order for two of these useful implements as follows:

Wanted—one goose.  
Also—another goose.

And was he not right? “Good style” avoids even the appearance of grammatical incongruity. Yet another has rightly said, “The plural of *tailor's goose* is *goose-irons*.”

Number is a grammatical property that must be dealt with, and many specific points must be noted. Yet the wise student will not linger too long over its minute details but pass on to larger investigations of more broadening grammatical truths.

## XVII

### GENDER

English surpasses in the simplicity of gender all other languages, and has established its claim to be the most philosophic among idioms.—M. SCHELE DE VERE.

Latin has the English gender distinction by sex, and in addition to it (but not in conflict with it) the system of gender by endings. Only those nouns which have no gender according to the English Syntax, are divided into masculine, feminine, and neuter endings.—HARPER AND BURGESS.

“Young nations, and those having a lively imagination impute sex to many lifeless objects. Thus the Algonquin tribes, as well as the German nation have many facts of gender that come from the imaginary world in which the people are inclined to dwell. \* \* \* But English is a practical business-like language.”

Sex, whether fanciful or real, has no proper connection with gender.—STRONG, LOGEMAN AND WHEELER.

Gender is no natural distinction in language.—PEILE'S PHILOLOGY.

Nothing hinders us from supposing that grammatical gender originally meant something quite different from sex.  
JESPERSEN.

“In Germany, a gentleman writes a masculine letter of feminine love to a neuter young lady, with a feminine pen and feminine ink on masculine sheets of neuter paper, and encloses it in a masculine envelope with a feminine address to his darling, though neuter, Gretchen. He has a masculine head, a feminine hand and a neuter heart. A masculine

father and a feminine mother have neuter children. They eat neuter bread, feminine butter and masculine cheese."

Those who are born to the English idiom and are blessed in the absence of nominal gender in their mother tongue cannot help looking at its existence in other languages as a useless complication of linguistic machinery.—STARCK.

The lack of grammatical gender in English has enriched the language with *poetical* gender. The figure of personification is denied to languages having nominal gender.—JOYNES.

Gender in modern English is a very different grammatical property from that which belongs to most inflected languages. The office of gender forms in English is to show sex. Yet in general grammar, gender is usually a matter of the form of a word and of its agreements with other words, and seems only remotely connected with the idea of sex. Many scholars believe that the gender forms of general grammar were originally sex forms, and that they came into use by poetically attributing sex-qualities to inanimate objects. This is a matter of conjecture, however, rather than of proof. Jesperson and some other recent writers on language have expressed doubts as to whether this is the true origin of grammatical gender.

If gender in English be considered strictly as an inflection it belongs exclusively to a very small number of nouns, such as *actor*, *actress*. Even these might perhaps be ruled out as being two words having the same root, rather than grammatical forms of the same word.

Somewhere in the English language course, whether under the head of grammar or of word formation, the

student needs to become acquainted with the feminine suffixes. The most important of these is *ess*, used in certain titles of nobility for a wife who shares the honors of her husband, as *baron*, *baroness*; also in a few cases it indicates a woman who holds in her own right an occupation or character that may belong to either sex, as *prophetess*; *heiress*. *Ine* in *heroine*, *a* in *sultana*, *trix* in *executrix*, are also feminine suffixes that have come into English from various sources, but are not used in new formations. *Ess* is the only living feminine suffix, that is, the only one that can be used to make new word forms, and this is very rarely done.

Most of the sex ideas in nouns are expressed by "gender-equivalents"—a name sometimes given to the large class of words that denote sex by the use of different words, instead of by a change in termination. Such are *boy*, *girl*; *youth*, *maiden*; *cock*, *hen*; *uncle*, *aunt*; *father*, *mother*; and most important of all, the singular pronouns of the third person, *he*, *she*, and *it*. To these must be added various titles that have sex signification, and also the various compound words which are made to serve the same end, as *he-goat*, *she-goat*. The use of the personal pronoun with a noun to show gender is peculiar to English; but the awkwardness of the construction has led to its gradual abandonment. The older writers used it frequently. Such combinations as *he-friend*, *she-condition*, may be met with in the older English writings. Thus Fuller speaks of a *she-saint*, and *she-devils*, and Shakspeare writes "Be brief, my good she-Mercury."

Early English uses many gender-forms. But historical changes have so modified the language as almost to justify the sweeping declaration of Richard Grant White: "There is no vestige of gender in English. We simply do not call a woman a man, or a bull a cow."

Historical grammar shows many interesting facts of changes in English gender. In old English masculine, feminine, and neuter nouns were marked by different endings, and articles and adjectives had agreeing gender forms. Some of these old gender nouns have come down to us, but bearing no longer any gender distinctions. Nouns in *dom* as *freedom*, were originally masculine. *Ung, nes*, (now *ing* and *ness*) were feminine endings, as in *greeting, goodness*.

Some diminutives in *en* as *maiden, chicken* were neuter. But *en* was also a feminine ending, as found to-day in *vixen*. *Ster* was another old feminine ending that has come down to us in *spinster*. Many words were formed with this suffix, as:

<i>Mas.</i>	<i>Fem.</i>
seamer	seamster
baker	bakester
brewer	brewster.

In the fourteenth century *ess* began to replace *ster* as a feminine suffix and *ster* began to acquire a masculine signification, as in *huckster, songster, teamster*, and *youngster*. New feminines were then formed from some of these words, producing such hybrids as *songstress, seamstress*.

By the Elizabethan period *ess* had become the com-

mon feminine suffix. Most of the feminines compounded with *ess* have now gone by, one form being used for both genders. The grammars of the early part of the nineteenth century give many such feminine forms—as, *teacheress*, *doctoress*, *sculptress*—that are now wholly obsolete. Even during the last generation the words *authoress*, *poetess* and *negress* have fallen into disuse. Most of the names of classes that are formed on mental or moral qualities have no gender distinctions, as *saint*, *sinner*, *thief*, *friend*, *genius*, *schemer*. In very ancient English writings, however, such words as *saintess*, *synneress*, occur. The modern practice is to ignore the feminine form whenever sex is immaterial to the character or office itself. On this principle such words as *authoress*, *postmistress*, *executrix* seem to be unnecessary. *Actress* is justified, however, by the habit of engaging women for women's parts. One important part of the teacher's work in dealing with gender is to show the present usage with regard to such words, so that those forms and those only, may be employed, which belong to the reputable usage of the modern age.

Although the etymology of gender includes many facts about nouns, the syntax of gender belongs almost exclusively to the three little pronouns *he*, *she*, and *it*, and their relations to other words. In regard to these pronouns, gender, though not an inflection, is an important “grammatical distinction,” denoting the natural distinction of sex which belongs to living objects. Yet the neuter pronoun is as much “a gender” as the

others, since it also shows a grammatical distinction regarding sex. The word "common" as applied to gender—since there is no common sex—is omitted from many modern grammars. Yet it is a convenient term to apply occasionally to such words as *cousin*, *friend*, *culprit*, etc., which can stand as antecedent to pronouns of either gender according to the application of the word. An obsolete term, *epicene*, found in ancient grammars, was applied to animal names, which, while strictly of one gender, were made to cover both sexes.

The English language claims the right to apply the terms *he* and *she* to inanimate objects, and personification is a frequent and forceful rhetorical figure both in speech and writing.

Nouns have a small share in the syntax of gender since they require the pronouns to "hark back" to themselves as antecedents for the justification of their gender-forms. This is as true of the nouns which are not "gender-words" as of the others; so in a sense, most nouns may be said to be of the neuter gender.

The syntax of gender, though not large, requires careful attention. The rule for the agreement of the pronoun with its antecedent is the only important grammatical rule that belongs to gender. But the applications of this rule involve some knotty points. One of the chief of these is the choice of pronoun when its singular antecedent applies equally to the two sexes. Usage in this case generally takes the masculine as the representative of both. There are cases, however, when the feminine is used, as being most representative

of the class; as “The teacher instructs her children.” But there are other cases in which each pronoun seems objectionable. For these, common (or vulgar) usage often employs the plural pronoun, which is ungrammatical, although some writers have contended for it as the best that can be done. Others have seriously proposed the introduction of a new pronoun to fill this “felt want.” But new grammatical words must be a “language growth” and not a cunning invention. Some writers try to avoid the difficulty by the use of *one* as a pronoun that may have either gender, but this, if often repeated, will easily become tedious. In the sentence “John or Ellen has lost his or her pencil,” both ambiguity and grammatical inaccuracy have been avoided. Yet the awkwardness of the construction is certainly a rhetorical if not a grammatical fault.

The fact remains that English, with all its virtues, is not a perfect language. It has its own limitations, and when we are brought face to face with them, we are constrained to make a circumlocution, thus avoiding the point at issue; or else “among several evils to choose the least.”

## XVIII

### CASE

Case is the subject, perhaps not of the greatest difficulty in grammar, but of the greatest confusion.—DAVENPORT AND EMERSON.

The Finnish language has fourteen cases, but I do not suppose that it can do more or indeed as much with its fourteen as the Greek is able to do with its five.—TRENCH.

Case classification is of necessity in some measure arbitrary, and should be made as the best practicable compromise of thought analysis on the one hand and of form analysis on the other. In this view it seems best to limit the English cases to four.—DAVENPORT AND EMERSON.

The objective case in English does duty both for the accusative and the dative of other languages.—MASON.

There is no noun in our language which really has an objective case. Still, partly by analogy with the pronouns, and partly because many other languages related with English and even the English itself in earlier times, do distinguish the object from the subject in nouns as well as in pronouns, we usually speak of nouns as having an objective case.—WHITNEY.

The objective of nouns is not merely a figment as regards the speech of to-day; it is something which the language has rejected. It represents the Egypt from which we have come out. It is, therefore, not a harmless fiction; it is a harmful falsehood.—TOLMAN.

We should treat English as precisely what it is, not as it would be if it were Latin or any other language.—WHITNEY.

There are only seven words in the English language which show any difference between the nominative and the objective case. These are I, we, thou, he, she, they, and who. When we remember that two of these are plurals of another two; that *thou* has only a limited or archaic use; that *he* and *she* may be regarded as gender forms of the same pronoun; and still further, that the change from *I* to *me*, *we* to *us*, etc., is not a true inflection since it is not made by adding a new suffix to a common root—we are forced to acknowledge that the *inflection* of case in English has a very limited extension indeed.

The languages of the world differ greatly in the number of their cases. Professor Whitney notes that the Scythian tongue had from fifteen to twenty cases. The French language, on the other hand, has advanced even further than English in the rejection of case forms. Even the possessive case of nouns is lacking and the preposition *de* is used instead.

Old English had six cases: nominative, genitive, dative, vocative, accusative, and instrumental (similar to the ablative, using *by* or *with*.) These were distinguished by case-endings, and the definite article and adjective had also a declension of agreeing case forms. Case in those days was no trivial matter in English.

All the relations that belonged to these cases are still found in English syntax. But the dative and instrumental cases have lost their case-endings and become for the most part prepositional phrases. The vocative case is now merely the name of the person addressed,

with perhaps the interjection *O* prefixed. Even the accusative case is not distinct from the nominative, except in the seven little pronouns aforesaid.

Ancient grammarians, however, following the analogy of the old English, or perhaps that of the Latin grammars, contrived to recognize more cases than the inflectional forms gave evidence of. Thus the “greatly improved grammar” of Thomas Coar, published in London in 1796, had diagrams like the following.

Declension of *house*:

Sing.	Plu.
Nom. a house.	houses.
Gen. of a house.	of houses.
Dat. to a house.	to houses.
Acc. a house.	houses.
Voc. O house.	O houses.
Abl. with a house.	with houses.

Modern grammars have shown great differences in their treatment of case. Some avoid a strict definition of the term. Thus one grammar says: “Case denotes the relation which a noun sustains to other words in the sentence, expressed sometimes by its termination, and sometimes by its position.”

The number of cases given in different English textbooks varies all the way from zero to the original six. Even the recognition of the possessive as a case of nouns has been thought by some to be unnecessary. That nouns have a “possessive form” no one would deny, but the appropriateness of the word “case” for this adjective form of the noun is not universally

conceded. Wallis and some other grammarians distinctly call the possessive form of a noun or pronoun an adjective. It is certainly easier to teach children the meaning and use of the termination 's, than to teach the idea of case, and to justify the term by its application to the possessive.

Many grammarians, following the analogy of English pronouns, have fixed upon three cases for nouns, not as the necessary fact, but as the most convenient number. Thus Goold Brown writes, "It was a subject of dispute how many cases a noun shall be supposed to have. Public opinion is now clear that it is expedient to assign to English nouns three cases and no more."

The relations which a noun can hold must be fully studied. But this is another subject. These relations are many, but since they are not distinguished by differences in form the attempt to define the case idea in connection with these noun relations can only lead to confusion. The illustrations of case in English must be drawn mostly from the pronouns.

Personal pronouns have, as a rule, three grammatical case-forms. These should be fully known, as well as the relations which each may hold. This gives a certain amount of "syntax of case" which, however, belongs to the pronouns rather than to English nouns.

The question whether there can be any "property" of case which does not show itself in the form of the word is too subtle to be discussed abstractly with young students. In the sentence "He gave it to the minister,—him with the long white hair," it will be seen that the

case of the appositive pronoun is determined by the objective relation of the preceding noun. But such usage is rare in English and it can be treated simply as a matter of relationship without ascribing an "objective case" to the noun itself.

To sum up our conclusions: If the element of visible form were wholly lacking we should not speak of "case" in English. The only cases that the elementary student needs to consider are the three case-forms of seven little pronouns, and the possessive form which belongs to nouns. When the student is sufficiently advanced to deal with abstract questions and is familiar with other languages in which case has a somewhat different bearing, he may perhaps profitably discuss the question whether case is (as it has been variously defined) an "inflection," a "property," a "relation," or a "condition;" or whether, as one grammarian has laboriously informed us, "Case is the medium of distinction used to describe by the relation of a name or a substitute to other words, the relation of an object or idea to some fact or event, or of one object to another."

## XIX

### THE POSSESSIVE CASE

The Possessive Case is really another part of speech. It does not represent the noun in its strict use, as the subject or object of a sentence. It is purely a qualifying word, and makes the nearest approach to the Adjective, although we may also view it as having passed through the stage of the adverb.—BAIN.

The *s* interposition seemed likely to derive great assistance from the concurrence of the *his* construction. To the popular feeling the two genitives were then identical or nearly so, and as people could not take the fuller form as coming from the shorter one, they naturally supposed the *s* to be a shortening of the *his*.—JESPERSEN.

The extreme range of the possessive gives rise to ambiguity. For many of its remote extensions the preposition *of* is better.—BAIN.

The “signs of possession” (not in a demoniacal but a grammatical sense) have received some curious treatment at the hands of writers on language.

The most common genitive termination in old English was *es*, which was pronounced as an additional syllable and sometimes was written apart from its noun. It belonged at first to the singular of some masculine and neuter nouns, and was afterwards extended to the feminine. Other forms of this termination were *as*, *us*, *ys*, *is*, and simply *s*.

These genitives in *s* were not found in the oldest English, but made their appearance in the Northern dialects first and are due to Scandinavian influence. These genitive forms continued down to the fifteenth century. As late as 1420 such phrases as "vynes rootes," "strengthes qualitie," were used. Later came the elision of the vowel and the introduction of the apostrophe which marks our modern possessive case; but this sign did not come into general use much before the end of the seventeenth century. Indeed, Lowth's grammar of 1763 speaks of the use of 's as "a late Refinement, and what I really think a corrupt custom," adding, "The genitive case in my opinion might be much more properly formed by adding *s*, or when the Pronunciation requires it *es*, without an apostrophe."

Before the 's became established as the final form of the possessive, some other experiments were also tried. As the Anglo-Saxon endings dropped out of use a genitive value was sometimes given to a noun by simple juxtaposition without any added termination, as, *Venus beauty*. This method is still practically employed to avoid sibilants, though in the printed form we indicate the possessive character by an apostrophe, as "for righteousness' sake," "Moses' law," "boys' hats." Thus the Bible of 1611 had "Mars Hill," while later editions have "Mars' Hill."

Another way of indicating possession that came into frequent use, was by placing the pronoun *his* after the noun. Thus Shakespeare has "Mars his guantlet." A similar idiom is found in other languages,

though in English the usage may have been strengthened by its similarity to the original genitive termination when written apart from its noun, as in the line:

"And preyed Reynard is (his) wysdom."

The use of *his* after the noun appeared in early printed literature and continued for several hundred years. The older English literature abounds in such phrases as, "the egle hys nest." In the eighteenth century it was a common practice for the owner of a book to write his name upon the fly-leaf thus, "John Smith, his book." A well-known example of this use of the pronoun occurred in the English Book of Common Prayer, in which the last phrase of the Prayer for all Conditions of Men was formerly printed "for Jesus Christ his sake."

From the time of Ben Jonson to that of Addison, the theory prevailed that the 's (which was also in use) was a contraction of *his*. Ben Jonson did not himself favor the theory, but declared in his grammar that the idea that 's was a contraction of *his* would be "monstrous syntax." But the idea seems to have taken deep root, and has even been repeated in modern text-books.

Although the Anglo-Saxon genitive in *s* belonged only to singular nouns, modern usage has established 's as the plural possessive termination also, with the apostrophe alone when the plural already ends in *s*. A rule at one time crept into the grammars for the placing of the apostrophe after the *s* as a means of distinguishing the plural possessive from the singular in

nouns whose singular and plural are alike, as "a sheep's tail," "four sheep's tails." But this is not sustained either by modern usage or by historical reason. When there is danger of ambiguity it can be avoided by the use of a prepositional phrase.

Since 's is the modern possessive termination, it is well that the exceptions to the rule should be as few as possible. Usage is not entirely uniform on the question of adding 's to a singular noun that already ends in *s*. But the general practice and tendency seems to be wholly in favor of the regular termination. There is usually no difficulty for either the ear or the eye in adding 's to a noun ending in *s*, though it must usually be pronounced as a separate syllable, as James's hat, Thomas's ball.

The possessive sign is seldom added to names other than those of persons. A few special combinations have become in a measure stereotyped as "a day's work," "the sun's rays," "life's end," etc. Modern journalistic writers are also fond of adding the termination to the names of places, as "New York's new mayor," "Boston's grain shipments." Such expressions are concise and vigorous but are generally avoided in prose literary writings.

The possessive sign is sometimes added to a phrase instead of to a single noun, as "Longfellow the poet's home." An ambiguity that may arise from such usage is suggested by the old conundrum, "Since Moses was the son of Pharaoh's daughter, he was the daughter of Pharaoh's son, wasn't he?"

In certain English dialects the practice of making a whole phrase possessive has been carried very far, as in the following attributed to Somersetshire: "That's the woman-what-was-left-behind's child." Occasionally both a noun and its appositive have received the possessive sign, as "We left the card in Mr. Cary's, the secretary's, hand." There are also instances in literature where an uninflected noun is made an appositive to a noun with the possessive termination, as,

"Othello's pleasure, our noble and valiant general."

In phrases containing the adjective *else*, usage has varied in regard to the possessive sign, as,

They were more in Pendennis's way than in anybody's else.—THACKERAY.

I took somebody else's hat.—DICKENS.

On the whole, the weight of usage seems to be in favor of "anybody else's," though the position in the sentence, (whether at the end or not), and euphony, seem to have some effect in the decision. In questions the preferred form is "whose else?" Yet here, also, usage varies, as

Whose else's do you think?—DICKENS.

Yes, who else's daughter should I be?—GOSSE (TRANSLATING FROM IBSEN).

The distinctions of joint and separate ownership in the use of the possessive sign may be learned by the comparison of such phrases as,

Reed and Brown's Grammar.

Reed and Brown's Grammars.

Reed's and Brown's Grammar.

Reed's and Brown's Grammars.

An element of confusion for possessive forms is made by the occasional use of 's as a plural termination for letters, signs, and the names of words, when the addition of *s* alone would give ambiguity, as, "There are two l's in *skill*," "There are four Ye's and three We's on the page." But if such exceptional plural forms be allowed they should be made as few as possible. In the last century the forms of the genitives and the plurals were often confounded. Thus Addison in the *Spectator* wrote of "Purcell's Opera's."

The possessives of the personal pronouns never contain an apostrophe but represent other types of the old Saxon inflections. (See chapter on Personal Pronouns.)

In addition to the possessive forms of nouns and personal pronouns, English has one other word in the possessive case. *Whose* is the possessive of *who* both as a relative and an interrogative, and is occasionally used also as a possessive for *which*, especially in poetry.

The old genitive case covered some word relations that do not belong to the modern possessive case, and that are usually expressed in modern English by the preposition *of*, as, "The siege of Paris." The substitution of these phrases for the older genitive is due to French influence. In some similar cases where the possessive is allowable there may be ambiguity of mean-

ing. Thus the phrase, "My brother's picture," may mean a picture belonging to my brother, or one that represents him. Although usage allows this phrase with either meaning, yet in general it seems desirable to limit the possessive to the idea of ownership and to use *of* in other cases. Thus "The roar of the waves," is better in prose than "The wave's roar," although in poetry the latter form is sometimes used.

An idiom in English that is peculiar and sometimes difficult to explain is the use of the possessive case in an objective relation after *of*, thus making a double or cumulative genitive form. In the phrase "This book of John's" the simple and natural meaning is "one of several which he owns." Yet usage allows the same form in cases where there may be only one, as, "This child of ours is ill," "He is a servant of the General's." In the expression: "A Discovery of Sir Isaac Newton's," the use of the possessive makes the idea subjective, that is, the discovery was by him. If the simple (or nominative) noun form were used it would be Newton himself that was discovered.

There has been much grammatical history connected with the possessive case. An English writer (Mr. Serjeant Manning) has written an entire pamphlet on this subject under the elaborate title, "The Character and Origin of the Possessive Augment in English and its Cognate Dialects."

## XX

### COMPARISON

We should hold apart true comparison of adjectives and the mere combination of adjective and adverb.—WHITNEY

The rule requiring the comparative where two objects are compared is strictly true for Latin but not for English.—ALLEN.

The inflection of comparison belongs to some adjectives of quality and to a few adverbs. The forms are three in number and are called "degrees," though one or two modern grammars object to that term and prefer simply the word "forms," which indeed seems to cover all real needs.

These forms or "degrees" are said to express degrees of quality, but must not be supposed to do so in any absolute way. The comparative simply shows that one of two objects compared has more of the quality than the other. It does not show "more of the quality than the positive" as many grammars have stated. Indeed, in more than half the cases where the comparative is used, the quality is not present in a very marked degree, while there must be a prominent and positive quality to justify the use of the positive form of the adjective. I may say "John is taller than James," when neither of them could be called tall.

In a similar way the superlative does not show "the

greatest degree of the quality," but only the greatest to be found in the group of objects that are compared. Even when we use the positive degree there is a subtle comparison of the object with an assumed average that is held in mind as the standard. If I say "These are large apples," I mean that they are relatively large as compared with the average apple.

The comparative form is exclusive, separating the objects compared, and is usually followed by *than*. The superlative is inclusive, and is usually followed by *of*. The superlative may be correctly used in the comparison of two objects when these constitute an entire class.

Terms of approximate comparison are sometimes used in English as "rounder," "more perfect." The idiom rests on a lower conception of the quality named, and is equivalent to "more nearly round," "more nearly perfect." The phrase "My Dearest Mother" has in it an absolute superlative without any real comparison.

With long adjectives the adverbs *more* and *most* take the place of the inflectional forms of comparison; and with long and short adjectives alike, *less* and *least* are often used to express a negative kind of comparison. A whole phrase may sometimes be treated to such modification, as "This is more to my mind than that." *Very*, *exceedingly*, *rather*, *highly*, and other adverbs are frequently employed to denote degrees of quality, but in these cases there is no such specific comparison as is expressed by the comparative and superlative

forms. To add an adverb (even *more* or *most*) to an adjective is not truly an inflection of comparison, though *more* and *most* perform the same office as the terminations of comparison.

The use of *more* and *most* as a substitute for the terminations *er* and *est* came into use toward the end of the thirteenth century and is due to Norman-French influence. Chaucer frequently uses such forms as *wofuller*, *fittingest*. In the Elizabethan period, and even later, writers paid little attention to the length of the adjective in determining the mode of comparison. Thus Milton has *hopefullest*; Goldsmith, *cunninger* and *cruelest*; and even Washington Irving uses *knowingest*. Such sentences as "The delectablest lusty sight and movingest object methought it was," are found in early English literature.

Double forms of comparison were also used by the older writers. Thus the Bible has "most straitest sect."

In Shakespeare we read:

A more longer list of virtues.—ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.  
Thy most worst.—WINTER'S TALE.

The more better assurance. — MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

Ben Jonson speaks of this usage as "a certain kind of English Atticism imitating the manner of the most ancientest and finest Grecians."

In such expressions, *more* and *most* seem to have been first added to intensify the force of *er* and *est*.

Later they came to take the place of *er* and *est* for long adjectives.

In this connection we may notice the anomalous phrase "less happier land," used by Shakespeare in King Richard II, and also Milton's interesting line,

"And in the lowest depths a lower deep."

Most of the so-called irregular comparisons are merely isolated adjective forms which have lost their associated degrees of comparison. Thus, *better* and *best* had an ancient positive, *bat*; *worse* and *worst* had a root adjective *weor*, meaning *bad*. *Hinder*, *nether*, *after*, *over*, *either*, and other words are ancient comparative forms, from which the other degrees have been lost. *Inner*, *upper*, *further* and some others have in present usage only an adverb, instead of an adjective, for the positive degree.

Among the irregular forms of comparison there are a few that show traces of vowel modification, and since regular forms are also in use paronyms have been developed, as *elder*, *older*; *latter*, *later*; *last*, *latest*. Of these the irregular form is always the earlier.

There is much interesting word study that can be undertaken in connection with the irregular forms of comparison, but this belongs to general etymological study rather than to the subject of true grammatical inflection.

## XXI

### VOICE

Grammatical terms are conventional and often unsatisfactory.—TOLMAN.

The absence of a reflexive is one reason why English has never developed a passive voice for any of its verbs.—RAMSEY.

The change of the verb for voice consists in the invention of a Passive variation of the verb, for stating the same action in a different form. To repeat all the tenses and moods of the verb, under a different termination, merely to exhibit a difference such as this, seems a great waste of power.—BAIN.

Voice is that form of a verb which shows whether the subject represents the actor or the one who receives the act. Exactly why the name *voice* should be given to this property of the verb it is hard to say. But it can be treated as a recognized term in grammar, in spite of its apparent lack of etymological meaning.

There is, however, no real inflection of voice in English, since all the passive verb forms are phrases made by the past participle of the verb with the various forms of *be*. For this reason some grammarians omit the term voice entirely. But since other languages have voice, grammarians have usually felt that it is convenient to retain the idea in English also, and to treat these passive phrases as a voice inflection of the verb.

The object of the active voice is made the subject of the passive. Where there are two objects, one direct and the other indirect, the direct object is the natural subject of the passive and the indirect object remains in the passive voice as an indirect objective phrase, as, "He gave me some oranges." Some oranges were given to me. Yet occasionally we find the indirect object becoming the subject and the direct object remaining over in the passive, and known as the "retained object," as "I was given some oranges." This construction is peculiar to the English tongue.

In the case of an attributive object following the direct object (a construction sometimes called the objective predicate or factitive object) it is the habit of the passive to make the direct part of the object the subject, using the following word or phrase as an attribute after the copulative verb phrase, as

They made her queen.

She was made queen.

Only transitive verbs have a passive voice. There is a large class of neuter or intransitive verbs that have no change of voice, and their forms are necessarily all active.

Even in the transitive verbs the passive forms are used far less than the active. Simple and illiterate people, as well as children, seldom use passive verbs, because their thought seldom takes the passive form.

An intransitive verb followed by a preposition is

sometimes thought of as a transitive verb, and then forms a passive, as

He was taken no notice of.

Such means were resorted to.

There are some intransitive phrases that resemble the passive in form, as "He is come," "The tower is fallen." The participle in these cases is sometimes treated like an adjective rather than as a part of a true verb phrase. This construction is very common in Shakespearian English. We read:

"The King himself is rode to view the battle."—KING HENRY VIII.

"I am declined into the vale of years."—OTHELLO.

"His lordship is walked forth."—KING HENRY IV.

Although these intransitive phrases resemble the passive voice they really conform to the grammar of old English in which *be* was the auxiliary of the perfect tenses for the intransitive verbs, and *have* for the transitive verbs. In modern English the transitive auxiliary *have* has become the perfect tense auxiliary for all verbs.

There are cases in which active verb seems to have a passive meaning, as "Meat will not keep in hot weather."

This also was more common in earlier literature, as

"What's to do?"—TWELFTH NIGHT.

To the student of general grammar both of these constructions suggest the so-called "middle voice" of

Greek and some other languages, used sometimes in sentences which in modern English would have an active verb with a reflexive object. Thus "The book sells well" seems to have come from a reflexive form "sells itself."

In the older English reflexives were commonly used when the actor was unknown, as "The door opens itself." Later the reflexive form was changed to the passive. Thus:

Collect yourself—be collected.

Prepare yourself—be prepared.

"I persuade myself" is much like "I let myself be persuaded" (middle voice). But "I persuade myself" and "I am persuaded" also mean nearly the same thing. "I am persuaded" may sometimes be a true passive, though it usually has a merely intransitive sense in which the subject is not thought of either as representing an actor or one acted upon.

From the comparison of such sentences as the foregoing it will be seen that intransitive, reflexive, and passive verbs have close relations to each other. Historically passive verbs seem to have developed out of a kind of "middle voice" which was closely allied to the old reflexive forms. Latin has the remains of a kind of "middle voice" in the deponent verbs which unite a passive form with an active meaning. To the student of advanced grammar such comparisons of the English idioms with the constructions of other languages are most helpful.

*Get* is occasionally used as an auxiliary in English in such a way as to bring the activity of others to the front, as "You will get punished." "He got himself elected." Such expressions belong to colloquial idiom but are seldom met with in literary English. They might be thought of as a kind of "middle voice" if it were worth while to adopt such a classification in English. It is better, however, to avoid needless classification and keep our grammatical nomenclature more simple.

Progressive verb phrases belong mostly to the active voice of the verb; yet the idea of continuous action is not wholly foreign to the passive. To express this the older writers used an active form with a passive meaning, as, "The house is building," which was perhaps a modification of the more strictly grammatical form of old English, "The house is a-building." The apparent incongruity in such phrases is increased by the fact that they cannot be used with all verbs. We cannot say for instance, "The boy is whipping," with a passive meaning; although Bolingbroke once wrote, "The crime, which was committing, etc."

In recent times a new progressive passive phrase has come into use, such as "is being built," "is being done." The earliest known instance of the use of "is being built" is found in a letter by Southey dated 1795. But this form of phrase is open to other objections besides that of its recent origin. In the sentence "The house, being built of stone, is cold and damp," the phrase "being built" signifies that the house is "done built," rather than in a continuous building state. But the

chief objection that has been raised to "is being built" is that *is* is made an auxiliary to its own participle *being*. Outside the present and past tenses also, this construction never occurs. "The house had been being built for ten years" would be intolerable. In spite of these objections, however, "is being done" and other like phrases seem to be fairly good English and have evidently come to stay. They are displacing the older form "is building." Yet this is not obsolete and when it can be used without confusion, it is preferred by many writers as being less clumsy and more forcible, and also as having the sanction of long-continued and classic English usage. No new phrases like "is building," however, seem likely to come into the language, while the other form is extending its use to other verbs as well.

Although the passive voice is no true inflection of English the passive verb phrases give an important variation to sentence forms. The conveniences of the passive voice are these: The agent may be unknown so that the active voice cannot be used except with an indefinite subject, as "Some one has broken the window"; that is, "The window has been broken." The passive voice also makes the object emphatic by putting it in a leading place. Sometimes the interest is entirely confined to the object, the agent being unimportant, as "The church was burned to the ground." Merely as an alternative form, also, the passive phrase sometimes gives a pleasing variety to sentence constructions.

## XXII

### MOOD

I have met with no satisfactory definition of Mood or Mode in Grammar and am unable to give one.—RAMSEY.

“Mood gives one the color of thought that the speaker desires to create. Sentences have moods because people have moods.”

There are infinite shades of doubt and contingency, of hope, and fear.—WHITNEY.

Mood is the change in the simple assertive form of the verb to express degree of certainty or doubt. The indicative is really no mood at all. Moods are changes from the unmodified form of assertion.—BROWN AND DEGARMO.

The imperative and subjunctive have no forms not found in the indicative.—HARPER AND BURGESS.

The enumeration of the so-called compound tenses amongst the tenses proper is due to a confusion between logic and grammar, only slightly removed from the fiction which gave us the still lingering potential mood (I can write) or which might with equal correctness have given us an obligatory mood (I must write), a desiderative mood (I like to write), an obstinate mood (I am determined to write), etc.—STRONG, LOGEMAN, AND WHEELER.

Mood, or mode, as it is sometimes called, is the change of form in a verb to show different ways in which the assertion is made; that is, as expressing a fact, a possibility, a command, the condition of another event, etc. It is a property of the verb that must be recognized even

though it has so little of the inflectional character that in defining the term it is not easy to find clear illustrations that can show the real character of mood in English verbs. A comparison of the sentences "He was here," and "If he were here he would do it," gives an idea of difference between the indicative and subjunctive moods. Again, the sentences "Thou goest," and "Go thou," illustrate a difference between the indicative and imperative moods.

The subjunctive and imperative are not really distinct inflectional forms. They are, however, modifications of the assertive form that require explanation.

The verb *be* has more of mood than any other verb: yet even in this, the most important and irregular of all verbs, the modal inflection is slight.

The right classification of moods is by no means universally agreed upon. Some ancient grammarians reckoned as many as ten different moods. A few years ago five moods were usually named in English grammars,—the indicative, potential, subjunctive, imperative, and infinitive moods. Some grammarians added a sixth mood, *would* and *should* being separated from other potential auxiliaries as the distinguishing marks of a "conditional mood." The optative mood, or "mood of wishing" has sometimes been recognized, "May you be happy." A few grammarians have carried the classification of moods further still; and *elective*, *determinative*, *compulsive*, *obligatory*, *requisitive* and *vocative* are all names which have been applied to moods of verbs.

The infinitive no longer has any standing as a modal form of the verb. Instead of showing the "manner of the assertion" it makes no assertion and is a verbal noun.

The potential mood is also omitted from most modern grammars. The forms are not made by inflection and they have varied uses. The potential auxiliaries, however, need careful study in regard to their peculiarities of meaning and use. This is a difficult task for foreign students of English and it affords a large field for study even with the native-born among English-speaking peoples. The potential forms may be dealt with simply as a class of phrases similarly formed rather than as a true mood of the English verb.

The subjunctive mood fills less space in the grammars than formerly, since subjunctive forms are less used and the indicative form with a conjunction of doubt prefixed is no longer called subjunctive. Modern grammars clearly recognize that the essence of the subjunctive mood lies in the verb itself rather than in the accompanying conjunction. The few facts of the subjunctive that are left in English grammar are of much interest and importance, however, and must be carefully treated by grammarians.

The imperative mood is said to be the form of the verb used in a command. But if we compare the sentences

Present arms.

Pass me the bread, please.

Give us this day our daily bread.

we see that from a superior to an inferior the imperative expresses a command; between equals it denotes a simple request; and when used from an inferior to a superior, or in man's address to God, it becomes the language of supplication and prayer. We also see that the imperative mood is characterized rather by the absence of inflection than by any positive inflectional element. It is simply the common form of the verb used as a sentence word as, "Come," "Try." By implication the second person is its subject but the verb seems independent of any sentence agreements.

The dividing line between the imperative and some of the other modal forms is hard to draw. Verb phrases with *let* as "Let me go," are sometimes classed with imperatives, sometimes with potential forms. The subjunctive of desire as "Long live the king" has an affinity with the imperative. *Shall* as a modal auxiliary has an imperative meaning. The question whether the Ten Commandments are in the imperative mood has been argued. But most grammarians limit the imperative mood to the formal imperative sentence, as "Bring me the book."

The classification of moods in English, as has been seen, is in a degree arbitrary. Some modern grammarians have proposed to reduce all moods to two, the *Objective* (corresponding to the indicative) which deals with events as outside the speaker's own personality; and the *Subjective* (including the potential, subjunctive and imperative) which shows the relation of the speaker's own mind to the thought expressed.

It seems to be true that most of the facts of modal inflection are covered in English when a clear distinction is drawn between the "fact forms" and the "thought forms" of the verb.

The potential and subjunctive forms are of great interest to students of English and will be discussed further. (See Chapters 36 and 38.)

## XXIII

### TENSE

The grammatical tenses correspond very incompletely with the logical distinctions.—STRONG, LOGEMAN, AND WHEELER.

Some grammarians put in their conjugations what they call the compound tenses, as “I have worked,” “shall have worked,” and so on. But this can only serve to fill up a book, for all these consist merely in the introduction of the use of the verb *to have* in its various parts.—COBBETT'S GRAMMAR, 1818.

Certain cheap and facile novelists write habitually in the present tense and have won for this the name of hysterical present.—ARLO BATES.

Any reader acquainted with a foreign language knows how much care is requisite in translating the various English tenses in their different applications.—STRONG, LOGEMAN, AND WHEELER.

Tense may be loosely defined as the verbal form that shows time, and sometimes also the completeness or incompleteness of an event. Yet the only true tense inflection of the verb is the change from the present to the past tense. Future time is expressed by a phrase, and not by an inflection. There are other verb phrases which by means of the auxiliary *have* give the idea of finished action, and these are sometimes called the perfect or compound tenses. The six tenses commonly named are,

present,  
past,  
future,

present perfect,  
past perfect,  
future perfect.

The perfect tenses express the completion of an action or event relatively to the time of some other event and are therefore relative tenses. The present perfect represents the action as finished within the unit of time taken as the present, and before the actual present, as "I have written three letters this morning." The past perfect and the future perfect represent the action as completed in past or future time, and before some specified past or future event, as "I had written it before he came," "I shall have finished it before to-morrow noon." The future perfect, however, is cumbrous in its form and not often to be used.

The future and future perfect are sometimes called the first and second future, and some grammarians give to the past perfect the mysterious name of pluperfect (*i. e.* more than perfect) tense.

To distinguish it from the perfect tenses the past tense is sometimes called the imperfect past, or simply the imperfect tense; although it may be said that the present, past, and future are all imperfect tenses. By some grammarians also the past tense is called preterit, a term which is intended to convey the idea of wholly past. The name preterit, however, has sometimes been applied to the present perfect instead of the past.

Some of the reasons for these varied and confusing names may be learned by the study of general and

comparative grammar. The past tense in English is an indefinite tense, a mere past, and may denote either a continuing or a momentary action, as, "He lived by the river," "He fell down." Some languages, however, have differing tense forms for these two idioms. The Greek denotes momentary past action by a form called the aorist, in distinction from the imperfect past; but the Teutonic languages do not make this clear distinction between the imperfect past and the finished past.

The perfect tenses in English also have somewhat of the same indefinite application, and can be either complete or incomplete perfect tenses, as, "I have lived my life," "I have lived here for many years."

Continuous action is usually expressed in English by the present participle with the auxiliary *be*. These forms are found through all the six tenses and are sometimes called the progressive tense-forms. In the present and past another phrase-form, called the emphatic, is made by the use of the auxiliary *do*. These verbal forms are used in interrogative and negative sentences also.

The future tense has two forms which may be briefly indicated as follows:

1. I shall. You will. He will.
2. I will. You shall. He shall.

The first of these, however, is the fundamental form of the future tense. The second of these future forms is sometimes classed as a modal form rather than as the true future tense. (See Chapter 37.)

Old English had fewer tense forms than we recognize to-day. There was no distinct form for the future, its place being covered by the present, a practice which is still recognized as correct, as "He comes (or is coming) to town to-morrow." The present is also the necessary tense to express unchangeable truths, as, "God is good," "Man is an animal." It is also used to make past events appear more vivid, and in this use, it has sometimes been called the historical present. The too frequent use of this form may become a mannerism with writers.

The distinction of six tenses belongs only to the indicative mood. In the subjunctive the verb *be* has two tense forms, *be* and *were*, but the difference in their use is not strictly one of time. Other verbs have progressive subjunctive forms made by using *be* and *were* as auxiliaries with the present participle, also a perfect subjunctive in the third person with *have* as the auxiliary, as, "If he have done it," but this is rarely used in modern English.

The so-called potential mood has imperfect and perfect forms with each of its auxiliaries, and since some of the auxiliaries are past tenses of the rest, the potential mood is sometimes said to have four tenses, present, present perfect, past, and past perfect. The meaning and use of these potential phrases should be carefully considered, but the distinctions are not chiefly those of time signification. Participles and infinitives have also imperfect and perfect forms which are sometimes treated as tenses in a certain sense.

There are a few questions of syntax that relate to the connection of tenses in clauses of the same sentence. In the expressions "I think I shall," and "I thought I should," the tense of the subordinate verb has been determined by that of the principal clause. But when a universal truth is quoted indirectly, the present tense is not relinquished on account of any supposed need of agreement, as, "Such a man would not admit that two and two *is* (not *was*) four." Special care must be exercised in regard to the tense of an infinitive after certain verbs, as, "He hoped to do it" (not, to have done it.) There are examples in literature, however, where the perfect infinitive seems to be justified. In Milton's line, "He trusted to have equalled the Most High," the perfect infinitive seems to have been chosen partly by the sense of attraction, and partly from the wish having extended itself to the completed fact. But the subject of connection of tenses, like many other grammatical subjects, is a matter of clear thinking rather than of grammatical or rhetorical rules, and is best treated by the examination of concrete illustrations. The older English allowed tense attractions that would now be condemned, as, "He knew what was in man."

The subject of tense has been variously treated by grammarians and more than twenty tenses have been recognized. To adhere to six because there are six tenses in Latin is not perhaps a very good reason. Yet English grammar seems to have settled upon six tenses and this is perhaps as good a number as can be named, though the distinction between phrase forms and true

tense inflection must not be lost sight of. The student need not use all the nomenclature that has been applied to the tenses. But he should know the different terms in order to deal intelligently with the text of various grammars, and with the facts of comparative grammar that throw light upon the structure of the English language.

## XXIV

### NOUNS AND THE NOUN RELATIONS

Grammarians, anxious to give some easy rule by which the scholar might distinguish nouns from other words, have devoted time to put the words *the good* before any word, and have told him that if the three words make *sense* the last word is a noun. This is frequently the case, as "the good horse," "the good dog," but "the good sobriety" would not appear to be very good sense. You must employ your *mind* in order to arrive at the knowledge here derived.

—FROM COBBETT'S GRAMMAR. Published in London, 1818. Called by Bulwer "the only amusing grammar in the world."

The difference between common and proper nouns is the logical difference between universals and particulars and has no place in grammar whatever.—FITCH.

"Grammar deals with thought relations."

The lack of inflection is the student's best opportunity in thought analysis, and in study of language tendencies and of the necessary relation of thought and speech.—DAVENPORT AND EMERSON.

Nouns are recognized by the fact that they are name words. But the basis of classification for parts of speech is the use of the word in sentences, and the fact that the noun (by virtue of being a name) is the natural subject of a sentence, should also be pointed out.

In subdividing a part of speech, we should ask what grammatical purpose is to be served by the classification. The division of classes of nouns is less a grammatical

than a logical distinction. But it has some grammatical bearings as well.

The common noun is the name of a class of objects. It is only common nouns, as a rule, that can take an accompanying restrictive adjective or that permit a plural form. In the singular, a common noun usually takes the indefinite article unless some more distinctive adjective term is used with it.

A proper noun is the name of an individual object, and may be meaningless or arbitrary in signification. A proper noun seldom takes an article or accompanying adjective. The article *the*, however, accompanies many geographical proper names, as *The Mississippi*, *The Sahara*. This was less the case formerly than now. In the Bible, for instance, *Jordan*, *Euphrates*, etc., are used without the article. If made plural or limited by the indefinite article a proper noun loses a little of its "proper" character and becomes in a sense a class name, as, "The Henrys," "A Daniel come to judgment."

An abstract noun denotes a quality or some single circumstance considered in general terms, as *coolness*, *life*, *motion*. Its grammatical properties are similar to those of the proper noun, and like that it becomes a kind of class name if pluralized or preceded by an indefinite article, as, "The hopes of man," "A virtue."

A noun denoting material (as wool, leather) is closely allied to abstract nouns in meaning and in seldom taking a plural form.

Collective nouns are class names and therefore com-

mon nouns. But they can take either singular or plural agreements, according as the thought is centered on the group or on the individuals composing it, as, "The herd is large," "The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea." (For Verbal nouns see Chapters 40 and 41.)

The amount of inflection belonging to nouns is far less in modern than in early English. Nouns to-day have number, and one change of form for case. A few nouns also show a trace of gender inflection.

The distinction between the cases of a noun and the relations in which the noun may be used, should be held clearly in mind. Although the inflection of the noun is meagre the relations in which the simple or nominative form may be used are numerous. The more important of these may be illustrated as follows:

The *boy* is here,—subject.

He is a *boy*,—attribute, or predicate noun.

*Boy*, come here,—independent (or vocative).

John, the *boy* you wanted, is here,—appositive.

He saw a *boy*,—object of a verb.

He spoke to the *boy*,—object of a preposition.

He gave the *boy* an apple,—indirect object.

It will make him a good *boy*,—factitive object. (Also called objective complement, attribute, or predicate.)

The *boy* being gone, we waited. Used subjectively in an absolute phrase.

He being a good *boy*, we trusted him. Used attributively in an absolute phrase.

To be a good *boy* is his desire. Used absolutely in an infinitive phrase.

A few nouns of distance, time, etc., may be used adverbially after a verb, as, "He walked a mile," "He

waited two hours." Such a noun is sometimes called an adverbial object. Certain colloquial idioms fall into this class, as, "It is only skin deep," "I don't care a snap."

Most of the noun relations are shared with pronouns also. At least there is no hard and fixed principle that forbids the use of pronouns in any substantive relation. Practically, however, pronouns are seldom used in several of the rarer or more difficult noun constructions. The independent (or vocative) construction cannot well be filled by a pronoun. Pronouns are seldom (if ever) found in the position of factitive object or as the absolute attribute after a copulative infinitive.

In general, however, it may be said that a pronoun may fill any noun relation when it can be done without ambiguity, or violation of any other principle of good rhetorical style.

## XXV

### ADJECTIVES

"A word united to a class noun to narrow its range and increase its meaning."

The phrase "assuming adjective" is a happy substitute for "attributive adjective." But why not also say "asserting" instead of "predicate" adjective? Assuming and asserting almost seem to have been foreordained from before the foundation of the world for this use.—TOLMAN.

Each period or generation has one or more social adjectives which may be used freely and safely. Such adjectives enjoy a sort of empire for the time in which they are current. Their meaning is more or less vague, and it is this quality that fits them for their office.—EARLE.

The adjective is the greatest chatterbox and the veriest gossip that ever lived.—FROM GRAMMARLAND, OR GRAMMAR IN FUN. NESBITT, 1878.

It is a good rule to be frugal with adjectives; to select them carefully and to apply them so happily that they will add an effective descriptive element to composition.—MANLEY AND HAILMANN.

An educated gentleman may not know many languages, may not be able to speak any but his own, may have read very few books. But whatever language he knows he knows precisely; whatever word he pronounces he pronounces rightly. Above all, he is learned in the peerage of words, knows the words of true descent and ancient blood at a glance from words of modern *canaille*, remembers all their ancestry, their intermarriages, distant relationships, and the extent to which they were admitted and offices they held

among the natural *noblesse* of words at any time and in any country.—RUSKIN.

A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.—KING SOLOMON.

An adjective is a noun modifier. The articles and many of the numerals, demonstratives, possessives, interrogatives and relatives are included among adjectives. The possessive cases of nouns and pronouns and the participles of verbs are also of the adjective class. All of these are treated explicitly in other chapters of this book. There remains, however, one large division of adjectives, which represents the idea generally suggested by the term adjective. It includes those words of descriptive meaning which limit a noun by expressing a quality of the object named by the noun.

Qualities vary in degree and a word expressing a quality has usually a relative meaning. It is only these qualifying adjectives with a few denoting quantity and the adverbs that are allied to them, that have the inflection of comparison.

In old English the adjective was declined to agree with its substantive. As late as the fourteenth century the ending *e* was used to mark a plural adjective. But, except in the case of the demonstratives *this* and *that*, all number forms of adjectives have disappeared and the amount of pure grammar that belongs to adjectives is very small. In the fields of diction and of rhetorical style, the adjective demands more extensive treatment.

Students of etymology give much attention to the forms

that adjectives assume. Many Latin suffixes, as *ate*, *ent*, *ary*, *ive*, *ose*, and *al*, also a few French and Greek suffixes, as *esque* and *ic*, distinguish large classes of adjectives. There are many prefixes and suffixes that are freely used to form new adjective terms from other English words. Among these are the prefixes *un*, *sub*, and *super*; also the suffixes *ful*, *less*, *able*, *some*, and others. Some of these are added to nouns to form adjectives, as in *fruitful*, *troublesome*, *senseless*, *rainy*. Others are added to verbs, as in *movable*, *active*.

Almost any noun can take an adjective use, as in *horse rake*, *coal oil*, *mineral soap*, *mosquito bite*. Compounds are common among adjective terms, as four-footed, high-spirited, life-like, new-born.

Adjectives are of two classes according to the positions they occupy. Those which accompany the noun (usually preceding it) are often called attributive adjectives. When several adjectives limit the same noun the one expressing the most inherent quality stands nearest to it, as, "a feeble old man." An adjective may also be used after a copula as a predicate term. The use of an adjective implies an act of judging, so the predicate use of an adjective is a primary office, as, "The sky is red." Many of the predicate adjective terms, however, are participles, as, "The book is written."

Since the use of an adjective implies an act of individual judging, a careful speaker often feels a sense of modesty in using a descriptive adjective, except for the more obvious qualities of objects. A wise writer or

speaker will be discriminating in his use of adjectives, and avoid over-coloring, or exaggerated statements as weakening to style. Yet the restriction should not be so great as to make the style bald or prosaic. One should do justice to his own impressions of objects.

There are many adjectives of rather vague meaning which express not so much objective qualities as the subjective impression which objects give to the observer's mind. Such adjectives as nice, elegant, quaint, refined, coarse, splendid, beautiful, and horrid, belong to this class. These adjectives owing to their lack of definiteness are put to many uses. They are conventional in application, and sometimes change their meaning from one generation to another. They are also difficult to translate into the idiom of other languages.

For these, and other reasons, the rhetoric of adjectives is an important and difficult subject. Precision and propriety of style depend very much upon the writer's choice of adjective terms. An abundant vocabulary of adjectives to choose from, is a part of a good writer's stock in trade. The free command of such a vocabulary, with good taste and careful observation, and a desire to tell the truth, will enable a writer to add much strength and beauty to style through his appropriate use of adjective terms.

## XXVI

### THE ARTICLES

Three little words you often see  
Are Articles *a*, *an*, and *the*.

—RHYME IN OLD GRAMMAR.

"It is manifestly incongruous to give a whole part of speech to three such little words regardless of the disproportion of dictionary space."

Two adjectives require special attention, the articles *a* or *an* and *the*, the one being historically a numeral, the other a demonstrative.—EMERSON.

The rare and judicious use of the article in English is one of the points in which its beautiful simplicity is best shown. In its proper omission, especially whenever the sense of the noun is not limited or determined, lies an excellence of English, even over Greek where it is often used without giving additional weight or conferring a clearer meaning to the noun which it accompanies.—M. SCHELE DE VERE.

The older text-books not only made the article a part of speech in English, but placed it first in the list. There are modern grammars which in their effort to reduce grammar to a minimum leave out all reference to this class of words. But in spite of their diminutive size, and the paucity of their grammatical properties, there are interesting and important questions that relate to the meaning and use of articles.

The articles are to-day classed with the adjectives and

properly so, but they differ from all other adjectives in the closeness of their relation to nouns, a relation so close as hardly to allow of their being uttered as distinct words, but rather as a kind of prefix to the substantives which they accompany.

The origin of these little words throws some light on their general adjective character. *The* is a weakened form of the demonstrative adjective *that*, while *an* or *a* is a modified form of *ane* or *one*.

The expressions “*a one*,” “*a union*,” illustrate the fact that it is the initial sound of the word rather than the initial letter which guides the choice of form for the indefinite article. Before an unaccented syllable beginning with *h*, the form *an* is sometimes used, since the consonant character of *h* is not distinctly marked, as “*an historical novel*.”

In the older English *an* was used before *h*, in some cases where we now use *a*, as, “When they had sung an hymn they went unto the Mount of Olives.”

Articles have no inflection and therefore no agreement. The old rule, “Articles must agree with their nouns in number,” simply means that the indefinite article is singular in meaning and accompanies a singular noun. In the oldest English the article was declined with five cases, as is to-day the fact in German and some other languages.

There are many delicate questions of grammar or of rhetoric that relate to the use or omission of the article. Some of these are suggested by comparison of such expressions as,

A cotton and a silk umbrella.

A cotton and silk umbrella.

or,

The northern and eastern boundary.

The northern and the eastern boundary.

The northern and eastern boundaries.

While the omission of a necessary article is a frequent grammatical error there are not wanting cases of its meaningless and erroneous insertion, as,

“A rare kind of an eagle,” for “a rare kind of eagle.”

By comparing “There are a few” and “There are few,” we see that the second admits deficiency and is really negative in meaning. *The* before an adjective converts it into a noun of generic meaning, as “None but the brave deserves the fair.” But the omission of the article sometimes gives a noun a wider generic meaning. *Man* is a wider term than “a man” or “the man.” Most nouns, however, cannot be used abstractly in this way. *Table* and *book*, for instance, do not admit of this generic application.

If a noun is limited by both an article and another adjective, the article usually precedes. Yet there are idiomatic phrases containing pronominal adjectives where the article follows the other, as, “What a story,” “Such an action,” “Half an hour,” “Both the hands,” “Many a man.” Although *a* usually follows *many*, the phrases “a great many,” “a good many,” are in common use. When an adjective is modified by an adverb

of degree it often precedes the article, as, "So difficult a task."

There are words that resemble articles, whose unlike character should be recognized. In "Daddy's gone a-hunting," *a* is an old preposition, a contracted form of *at*. In "The more the merrier," *the* is an adverb, though the idiom is said to be derived from the instrumental case of the old English inflection.

Latin differs from modern languages in having no article. The recognition of articles by grammarians led to the enumeration in the early English grammars of nine parts of speech. Later opinion, however, has relegated the articles to their true position as a small, though important, sub-class under adjectives.

## XXVII

### THE PERSONAL PRONOUNS

Venerable relics of language.—M. SCHELE DE VERE.

The pronouns are among the oldest parts of speech, and consequently have undergone much change, so that their original forms are greatly altered. Yet they have preserved more relics of the older inflections than any other part of speech.—MORRIS.

A pronoun is as instantly discredited by any doubt about what it represents as an ambassador.—ARLO BATES.

“Pronouns are the most general kind of name, and depend on the circumstances of the sentence for their meaning.”

Pronouns in general are words which without being names and without being limited by an article are used in the relations of nouns. There is far less distinctiveness in pronouns as an entire class than belongs to the great divisions of pronouns taken separately.

The personal pronouns especially are a definitely marked class of words, and these are usually meant when one speaks of the pronouns. The other classes of pronouns—adjective pronouns, interrogatives and relatives—have a mixed character, and contain elements that ally them to other parts of speech.

The personal pronouns are so named because they have grammatical person, the only other English words that have this property being a few verbal forms that take personal agreements with their subjects.

They are used not so much to "avoid repetition of the noun," as to express personality. It is a marked step in a child's development, when he recognizes his own personality and begins to say "I." Although the personal pronouns are small in size and few in number, they seem to contain in themselves and in their agreements a most disproportionate part of the difficulties of grammar. There is no other group of words of equally diminutive size that require so full and careful treatment at the hands of grammarians, as the personal pronouns.

Almost all that there is of case and of gender as well as of person belongs to the personal pronouns. It has been said that if five small words, *she*, *her*, *hers*, *it* and *its*, were blotted out of the language there would be no longer need to recognize gender in English grammar. *He*, *his* and *him* would then have a common sex signification, as is now the case with the plural pronouns and we should be saved all discussion of gender forms and agreements.

Each of the personal pronouns has some peculiarities of its own and requires separate treatment.

Writers on rhetoric sometimes object to the use of the first person in written composition as savoring of egotism. A good writer will usually veil his own personality and express his thoughts in an impersonal way. Yet in epistolary writings or when the writer's personal experience is the fitting theme, there is no reason for excluding the simple pronoun, and it is a false modesty that resorts to unnatural devices in order to avoid it.

*We* is not exactly the plural of *I*, since there is usually but one *I* in the group referred to as *we*. *We* is sometimes used in a representative sense; as the editorial *We*, which expresses the sentiments of a paper rather than of an individual editor; or the royal *We*, which refers to a king as the head of the nation rather than in his personal capacity. It is said that the royal *We* was first used by King John who "thus found out the art of multiplying himself." *We* is also used for human beings generally, as, "Here we have no continuing city but we seek one to come." When a writer is expressing his individual sentiments *I* should generally be used.

The second person singular is not used in modern English except in the formal language of prayer or of poetry. Yet for these two purposes it ought to be thoroughly familiar to the English student. The Dutch language has gone even farther than the English in ignoring the second person singular and uses the plural form for both poetry and prayer.

The substitution of the plural for the singular in English began about the thirteenth century and seems to have been made at first for the monarchs and the nobility. The Quakers gave religious testimony to the equality of all men by retaining *thee* and *thou*. They would not render reverence to one and withhold it from others. Thus Charles Fox wrote in 1648, "When the Lord sent me into the world, I was required to *thee* and *thou* all men and women without respect to rich and poor, great or small."

But it seems to have been difficult for Quakers to retain the inflectional form of the second person, especially the verbal form, after it went out of common use. So colloquial Quaker dialect came to contain such anomalous expressions as "thee does," "thee is," which were afterwards retained by educated Quakers as a mere conventionalism or a means of giving distinctiveness to the Quaker sect.

From the fourteenth to the seventeenth century *thou* was used to express familiarity toward friends, superiority toward inferiors, and anger or contempt toward strangers or enemies. Thus Coke's historical insult to Sir Walter Raleigh was, "Thou viper, for I will *thou* thee, thou traitor." In the writings of Robert de Brunne (1303) a conversation between husband and wife is given, in which she says *Ye* to her lord, but he calls her *thou*.

In the German and French languages, the second person singular is made to express familiarity, whether it be that of endearment or of contempt. The English student of these languages needs to be mindful of the proprieties of a situation or he can easily give offence either by exceeding or withholding the familiarity that is felt to be due. "Ach," said the sentimental German maiden who had lately acquired a lover, "That first *du!* How sweet it is!"

*Ye* was originally the nominative plural, *you* being the objective or dative form. Afterwards *ye* was sometimes used as an objective, as,

The more shame for ye ; holy men I thought ye.—  
KING HENRY VIII.

*You* is now the form for both cases. But in King James's version of the Bible the original case distinctions of *ye* and *you* are carefully preserved, as, "I have piped unto you and ye have not danced."

*He* and *she* have been used as nouns by Shakespeare and other writers, as, "The fairest she," "The proudest he." *He* was frequently used in old English where *it* would now be employed. Thus Lily's grammar says, "The Subjunctive Mood has commonly some conjunction joined with him." An old dialect form of the third person was *a*, as, "A brushes his hair a mornings." The colloquial use of *em*, as "Give 'em to me," is not a contraction of *them*, but a survival of *hem* the old plural dative of the pronoun.

The pronoun of the third person singular is the one example in English of three gender-forms. The only genuinely neuter word that the language contains is the pronoun *it*. Its original form was *hit*, and it had the same possessive form as the masculine, *his*, which was employed, with sexless signification, as, "If the salt have lost his savour." Occasionally also *her* was used in this way as, "Let patience have her perfect work." In the writings of Shakespeare *his* is often used with sexless signification, as in the Bible. Shakespeare also uses the nominative form *it* as a possessive in simple juxtaposition, as, "Go to it grandam, child. Give grandam kingdom and it grandam will give it a plum, a cherry, and a fig."

*Its* is comparatively a modern word. Spenser never uses it. The single instance in which *its* occurs in the King James version of the Bible (Lev. 25, 5) is a comparatively recent substitution for the original form *it*, "That which groweth of it own accord," etc.

The introduction of *its* seems to have been retarded by the idea that if an object became the owner of something it was personified, so that *his* or *her* was the proper term to employ.

The use of the pronoun *it* is extended to refer to young children and to the lower animals when the distinction of sex is not observed.

The very multiplicity of gender forms in the third person of the pronoun gives us a sense of incompleteness. There is no singular pronoun that applies equally to the two sexes. To supply this lack the masculine form has sometimes been adopted. But none of the expedients that have been tried are totally without objection for all requirements.

In the text-books on grammar two forms are given for the possessive of most of the personal pronouns. Of these, the first forms, *my*, *our*, *thy*, *your*, *her* and *their* are used only as noun modifiers, and by a few grammarians they are called adjectives. The second forms *hers*, *ours*, *yours*, and *theirs* are often called absolute or independent possessive pronouns, since they are never used with an accompanying noun. *Its* has no corresponding absolute pronoun. *His* is used interchangeably in the two relations. *Mine* and *thine* are usually absolute or independent, but were formerly used

in the true possessive or adjective relation and are still so used in poetry, as, "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord." *My* and *thy* formerly occurred only before consonant sounds, but gradually came to be used before vowels as well, *mine* and *thine* being reserved mostly for the absolute functions.

*Hers, ours, yours* and *theirs* are really double genitive forms, the *s* having been added to words already genitive in form. These words are not found in the oldest English, but made their appearance with the other genitives in *s*, first in the Northern dialects. The forms in the Southern dialects were *hire* or *hir*, *oure*, etc., and sometimes *ouren*, *youren*, etc. The remains of these old possessives are sometimes met with in provincial dialects, as, *ourn*, *hern*, *hisn*, etc.

In addition to the simple personal pronouns there are a few compound personal pronouns, formed by adding *self* for the singular and *selves* for the plural, to the possessive case of the first and second persons, and to the objective case of the third person. The objective forms *himself* and *themselves* seem inconsistent with our sense of grammatical idiom. *Hisself* and *theirselves* were formerly in use, and children, reasoning from analogy, are inclined to form these compounds. Chaucer uses also an old objective form, "Full wise is he that can himselfen know."

A compound personal pronoun is not used as a subject, except rarely in poetry, as,

"Myself will guide thee on thy way."

It is usually either an appositive giving emphasis, as,  
“God himself will go with thee,”

or the reflexive object of a verb or a preposition, as, “I hurt myself.” The last being the most frequent and important use of the compound personal pronouns, they are often referred to as the *reflexive pronouns*. The identity of form for these two uses of the compound pronouns is a remarkable peculiarity of English, which, unlike most modern languages, has no genuinely reflexive pronoun, so the compound personal pronoun has been substituted for it. Double emphasis is sometimes given by the insertion of *own*, as “My own self.”

All the personal pronouns, whether simple or compound, and including the pronoun possessives, whether adjective or absolute in their function, may have pronominal agreements with an antecedent in gender, number and person, and this relation to an antecedent is one of the most important characteristics of personal pronouns.

## XXVIII

### THE ADJECTIVE PRONOUNS

Care must be taken not to make too many classes in elementary grammar; lest the important ideas be made to take rank with the unimportant, and the unity and simplicity of the movement in the study of the subject be destroyed.—BROWN AND DEGARMO.

"Although successful classification is the main thing, the work of classification can easily be overdone and made burdensome enough to frustrate its own aim by the multiplication of fine drawn distinctions and of technical rules designating them."

The indeclinables confirm the English characteristics. They are structural or functional, largely formless and with free interchange of function.—JOYNES.

All things considered, it does not seem desirable to recognize the relation of agreement in English. In the case of *this* and *that* the agreement exists, but has a logical basis in the inflection of these words as pronouns.—DAVENPORT AND EMERSON.

I leave many of these indeterminate pronouns. To notice every one individually in a particular manner could answer no purpose except that of swelling the size of a book—a thing which I most anxiously wish to avoid.—COBBETT'S GRAMMAR, 1818.

There is a large class of words of somewhat related meaning, which may be used interchangeably as adjectives or pronouns according as the nouns to which they relate are expressed or merely understood. To these

words the names adjective pronoun and pronominal adjective have been given by different grammarians, according as the emphasis is laid upon one or the other of these word functions.

In their adjective character these words do not express definite qualities, but they usually point out objects previously mentioned, or else they have a somewhat indefinite meaning referring generally to number or quantity.

Among these pronominal adjective words many sub-classes have been noted, but the classification is by no means perfect or entirely consistent. Among the sub-classes are the possessives and the numerals. *This* and *that* are known as the demonstratives, *each* and *every* as the distributives, the phrases *each other* and *one another* as reciprocals, and there is a large class of words which from their general lack of specific meaning are known as the indefinites. Other terms of classification have sometimes been given. *Much* and *little* and their related forms (*more*, *less*, etc.) are quantitatives. *All* and *some* are collectives. Some interrogative and relative words, as, *what* and *which*, are also both adjective and pronominal in their use.

The name adjective pronoun, first given by Murray, is the one most commonly applied to the general group. Yet for some of these words the adjective office is more important than the pronominal. Indeed, some of these related words cannot be used interchangeably in the two offices. Thus the distributive adjective *every* cannot be used in a pronominal relation. On the other hand

some of the indefinite pronouns, as *none*, are never adjective in their use. Certain nouns of similar meaning are generally thought of in a half-pronominal sense. The line between these and the indefinite adjective pronouns is not very distinctly drawn. Such are *aught*, *naught*, *anyone*, *anybody*, *no one*, *nobody*, *everyone*, *everybody*, *someone*, *somebody*, and even "a body," meaning *one*, as,

"Gin a body meet a body comin' through the rye."

The earlier English contained some words of this class that are now little used, as in "All and *sundry*," "I have *somewhat* to say unto thee," "*Divers* came from far," "There were *certain* that said," etc. While the general similarity of all such words is to be noted, the grammarian must deal with each word as pronoun, noun, or adjective according to the function which it fulfils in any individual sentence.

Most of the adjective pronouns are without inflection of any kind. A few of them can take plural or possessive forms, but are then (with the exception of *this* and *that*) like nouns in their character, as, "Here are the *ones* I meant," "Each can feel the *other's* grief."

*Any* and *none* are generally used with plural meanings. *Any*, however, was formerly singular, as, "If any, speak, for him I have offended." An old idiom, "this many years," shows a blending of numeral characteristics.

In addition to the adjective and the strictly pronominal use, some of the indefinites and numerals may be

limited by adjectives or articles and are therefore allied to nouns in their sentence relations, as, a *few*, the *other*, such a *one*, a good *many*, the little *one*, the *first*.

Some of the adjective pronouns are often used in pairs, as, *this*, *that*; the *one*, the *other*; the *former*, the *latter*; the *first*, the *second*; the *first*, the *last*, etc.

*This* and *that*, known especially as the demonstratives, are far more frequently used than most of the other adjective pronouns. They have also well-defined grammatical marks which are all their own. For this reason some grammarians have given them the distinction of being “a whole class” of pronouns, though this seems to be a rather questionable prominence to be given to two words however important.

*This* and *that*, whether used as adjectives or pronouns, have singular and plural number-forms. While most English adjectives, including the articles, have lost all their old English inflections, the demonstratives have held securely to their ancient number-forms.

Certain other words in English are somewhat allied to the demonstratives. The article *the* is in its origin a modified form of *that*. The adverbs *here* and *there* and the compounds *herewith* and *therewith* are also used in a demonstrative sense.

*That* was originally purely a Saxon demonstrative, but by a widening of its grammatical functions it has become an important relative pronoun as well. It has also acquired another connective office and is the most important conjunction for substantive clauses.

*This* and *these* point out the nearer objects, *that* and

*those* the more remote. The application of this principle in poetry when referring to objects previously mentioned seems to be that *this* and *these* refer to the things that were last named, *that* and *those* to the ones named earlier, as,

“Farewell, my friends, farewell my foes,  
My peace with *these*, my love with *those*.”

The idiom “that of” borrowed from the French, is a very convenient one in English, as, “His dress was that of a shepherd.”

While there are few general principles that can be formulated as applying to the adjective pronouns, there are many specific questions relating to the meaning and use of the individual words, which are of much interest to the student of idiomatic English.

## XXIX

### THE NUMERALS

"The numerals present the most compact system of synoptically harmonious words that comparative Philology discovers."

The numerals afford us one of the most striking evidences of the unity of the race divided as it now is into so many nations. Men to this day use everywhere the same way of counting.—M. SCHELE DE VERE.

The words that express number are grouped by one or two ancient grammarians as a separate part of speech; and there is certainly sufficient unity and peculiarity in them to make it desirable sometimes to speak of them together as constituting a special class of words. Yet their functions vary and they may be found occupying the places of nouns, pronouns, adjectives and adverbs. Their primary function, however, seems to be that of adjectives.

Number words are very numerous. Indeed, they may be said to be numberless since there is no limit to the extent to which counting may be carried. Yet after the first ten, our decimal system expresses new number ideas, not by new words, but by ingenious variations and combinations, with the occasional introduction of a new term, as hundred, thousand, million.

The number words used in counting, or to express simply how many, are called the cardinals. These are adjective pronouns in their nature; that is, they may be used as adjectives, or, like pronouns, they can take the noun office without the use of an article.

The number words which express the order in a series are called the ordinals, as, the first, the second, the last, etc. These may be adjectives, or they may be used as nouns, usually having the article prefixed.

Some numerals express repetition, or number of component parts, as *three-fold*, *double*. These are sometimes called multiplicatives, but the name seems less valuable than the terms cardinal and ordinal.

There are a few numerals which are primarily nouns, such as *pair*, *couple*, *score*, *dozen*, *triplet*, *trio*. Many of the indefinite adjective pronouns have a kind of numeral character, as *few*, *several*, *many*, *some*.

*Once* and *twice* are common numeral adverbs. *Thrice* is a similar word, now little used. To express the higher numbers adverbially such phrases as *three times*, *four times*, are employed.

The place of the numeral is usually before the noun. In old English and in poetry it sometimes follows the noun, as, "soldiers three."

When the cardinal and ordinal numerals are used together there is a difference of opinion among English scholars as to which should stand first. Some place the ordinal first, as, "The first three stanzas," and justify this usage on the ground that only one can be really first. Other grammarians have contended that it is

illogical to speak of a first three unless there are other successive threes; also that a plural idea in *first* and *last* is recognized both by old English and by the grammar of some other languages, as, "There are first that shall be last." The point does not seem to be conclusively settled, either by invincible argument or uniform usage, but there is a growing sentiment in favor of putting the cardinal numeral first. If it were incorrect to say "three first" it would be difficult to justify such expressions as, "The first hours of infancy," "The last days of Pompeii." Mätzner tells us that "In connection with *first* and *other* the cardinal number is found before or after"; and gives these illustrations: "The first four acts."—SHERIDAN. "For the first ten minutes." — COOPER. "Four other children."—LEWES. "Other seven days."—GENESIS.

The number form of the verb for certain idiomatic numeral phrases, as, "Three times four," has also been a subject of dispute among grammarians. But it is now generally agreed that the singular is most consistent with the idea to be conveyed. Thus, "Three times four (taken collectively) is twelve." In a similar way, "Five dollars is a large price."

## XXX

### THE INTERROGATIVES

"It is easier to ask questions than to answer them."

A wise questioning is the half-way toward knowledge.—  
BACON.

Interrogation is expressed in several ways. One of these is by a change in the order of the parts of the sentence, usually placing the verbal auxiliary before the subject. In the present and past tenses, where the common form of the verb has no auxiliary, the progressive or emphatic form of the verb is usually adopted, thus gaining an auxiliary, as, "Is he going?" "Does he think so?" The older English used the common form of the verb in these tenses as is still done in poetry, as, "Know ye the land where the myrtle blooms?"

Another way of expressing interrogation is by the use of interrogative words. Many of these are adverbs, as, *how*, *why*, *where*, *when*, *whence*, *wherefore*, and *whither*. Others belong to the pronoun or the adjective group. The interrogative pronouns are *who*, *which* and *what*. *Which* and *what* are also interrogative adjectives, as, "What book did you bring?" In old English *whether*, meaning which of the two, was also an interrogative pronoun, as, "Whether of the twain did the will of his father?" The interrogative pronoun *who* has three case forms, the others are indeclinable.

In the sentences, "I asked who came," and "He has decided which he will take," *who* and *which* are interrogative pronouns which have acquired also a conjunctive office by the incorporation of an interrogative clause into another sentence. Such pronouns are to be distinguished from the relatives, which require an antecedent. Yet there is a close historical connection between the two.

Interrogative adverbs may take a similar conjunctive office, as, "He is wondering where it may lead."

Compound pronouns formed from *who*, *which* and *what* are occasionally to be found with an interrogative use, as,

"Whoever would have thought it?"

In spoken English, even among well-educated persons, *who* sometimes introduces a question where the grammatical relation is objective, as,

Who does this dreadful place belong to?—MRS. HUMPHREY WARD.

In literary English and in the conversation of persons who have a strong feeling for grammatical consistency this is generally avoided. Yet where the governing word is far removed, the tendency of the language seems to be to ignore the restrictions of case, as, "Who do you think the committee will decide to give it to?"

## XXXI

### THE RELATIVES

Addison in his Humble Petition of Who and Which,\* allows the petitioners to say, "We are descended of ancient families and kept up our dignity and honor for many years till the Jack Sprat *that* supplanted us." But the supplanting was a restoration of an incapable but legitimate monarch, rather than a usurpation. Since the time of Addison, a reaction has taken place; the convenience of the three distinct forms has been recognized, and we have returned somewhat to the Elizabethan usage.—ABBOTT.

The use of *whose* for *of which* when the antecedent is not only irrational but inanimate has had the support of high authority for several hundred years.—EDWARD FITZGERALD HABL.

Recasting is necessary whenever a pronoun like an unruly sheep shows a disposition to escape from its master.—ARLO BATES.

When we say "the relatives" we usually mean relative pronouns, but there are also relative adjectives and relative adverbs. The idea that belongs to a relative is that it connects with an antecedent noun an adjective clause that limits that noun. A relative, therefore, holds a conjunctive office as well as that of another part of speech.

The simple relative pronouns are *who*, *which* and

\* "The Humble Petition of Who and Which" was written by Sir Richard Steele.—See *Spectator*, May 30, 1711.

*that.* *What* is also a relative simple in form, but holding compound relations in the sentence. *Who* is used only in referring to persons, *which* and *what* in referring to things, and *that* with relation to either persons or things. *Which* was formerly used of persons, as well as of things, as, "Our Father which art in Heaven." For the lower animals *which* or *that* is used. In referring to animals as intelligent beings, *who* is sometimes used, as, "You, my gallant gray, who have borne me safely, etc."

The use of *who*, *which*, and *what*, as relatives, comes from the influence of Norman-French, a language in which the interrogatives took on the relative character. The Saxon language used the demonstratives for this purpose. *That* is therefore a true Saxon relative. It is used only in restrictive clauses, and is usually the best connective for such clauses, as, "The books *that* I have read." In co-ordinating clauses—that is, those expressing an additional fact without restrictive force—*who* or *which* is used. Yet these are sometimes used restrictively as well, especially when a preposition is used, or for reasons of euphony. Some grammarians have insisted that *who* should not be used restrictively, but evidence from literature does not support this view. In restrictive clauses after a superlative or a negative word, or when the antecedent includes both men and things, *that* is always the proper relative, as "These are the best *that* there are," "These are not the ones that **I** meant."

The antecedent of *which* is sometimes an entire sen-

tence, as, "The teacher now came in, *which* was a relief." An old English idiom allowed the use of an article with the relative *which*, *i.e.*, "in the which."

*What* as a relative is equivalent to *that which* and therefore includes its own antecedent. This gives to the pronoun three functions. In the sentence, "He took what he liked," *what* is the object of *took*, the object of *liked* and also the connective of the clauses. This condensed use of *what* was perhaps learned at first from the Latin *quod*. It occurs often at the opening of sentences where the French would use the phrase *ce que*. Thus in *Paradise Lost* we read, "What in me is dark illumine, what is low raise and support." In the older English the pronoun *that* sometimes took this combined office of antecedent and relative, as, "Do that is righteous."

In addition to the simple relative pronouns there are others variously formed by compounding the adverbs, *ever*, *so*, and *soever* with *who*, *which* or *what*. Of these forms, the ones compounded with *so* and *soever* are older than those in which *ever* alone is used. These compound relatives, like *what*, may usually be analyzed into two words, and they therefore have three functions in the sentence. In "Whatever is, is right," *whatever* is the subject of the two verbs, and also the connective of the clauses. *Who* at the beginning of a sentence sometimes takes the same compound relationship, as, "Who steals my purse steals trash."

*Who* and its compounds have case-forms; the other relatives are indeclinable. Murray's old grammar

gives the phrase “of which” as the possessive of *which*, adding in a foot-note, “The possessive *whose* is sometimes by eminent authors connected with an antecedent of the neuter gender, but the connection is rather a poetical license than grammatical propriety and should be avoided.” In an earlier age, however, *whose* and *whom* were used in relation to things as well as persons, and there is a tendency in modern English to restore this earlier usage in the case of *whose*, as, “The glorious elevations on whose tops the sun kindles harmonies of light.” *Whose* has always been freely used in poetry to refer to things.

In using the compound pronouns derived from *who*, it is desirable that the functions given to one pronoun should allow of the same case-form. The sentence, “Avoid whoever is in a passion,” is open to criticism because the two relations of *whoever*, as object of *avoid* and subject of *is*, require unlike case-forms.

This class of sentences has been variously treated by different grammatical thinkers. Some persons would say, “Give the book to whomever comes in,” justifying this to their own minds on the ground that the objective relation of the pronoun comes first and belongs to the principal clause. Most grammarians perhaps would say, “Give the book to whoever comes in,” on the ground that the object of the preposition is the whole clause, “whoever comes in.” Others reasoning still more closely would say that the real object is not an entire thought that can be expressed by a clause, but a person who is merely described by an adjective clause

that follows. The discrepancy can be entirely avoided by the use of two words, "Give it to anyone who comes in."

But there is still another line of reasoning that gives some justification to the use of *whoever*. *Who* and its compounds are showing a tendency to become colorless words as to case. The grammarian of the future will perhaps maintain that *whoever* (like *whichever*) has no case-form, and can for this reason be both object and subject at the same time. (See Chapter 54.)

*Which* and *what* and their compounds are used also as relative adjectives, as, "Take *what* books you like," "Take *whichever* books you prefer." In the latter sentence *whichever* is a relative adjective equivalent to "those which," and is used to limit the noun *books*, also as the object of *prefer*, and as the connective of the clauses. *Soever* is sometimes separated from *what* in this adjective use, as, "What man *soever* he may be."

Certain adverbs—*where*, *when*, *while* and a few others—are freely used as relatives to connect adjective clauses with the nouns which they limit, as, "This is the place where he stood." The adverb in such a case is the equivalent of a prepositional phrase containing a relative pronoun, as, "This is the place at which he stood." The adverb is to be preferred in such sentences as a rule, for a prepositional relative phrase is often an awkward construction.

The conjunction *as* is sometimes used with the force of a relative pronoun after *such* and *same*, as, "Take *such as* you prefer," i.e., "Take those which you pre-

fer." *Than* after a comparative may take a similar pronominal office, as subject or object, as, "More came than were asked." *But* is sometimes used as a kind of negative relative, as, "There is nobody but knows it," *i. e.*, "who knows it not."

A relative pronoun, though it has no inflectional form, requires the following verb or pronoun to conform to the number, person or gender of its antecedent. This rule of agreement in a relative clause is most frequently violated after *anyone*, *such*, *every*, *neither*, and similar words. Grammatically such expressions are singular though the plural idea is suggested, as, "Any-one who injures his book must replace it." The case of a relative is independent of the antecedent, and is determined by the relation of the pronoun in the clause.

## XXXII

### VERBS AND THEIR PRINCIPAL PARTS

Having learned to distinguish verbs from the words belonging to other parts of speech, you will now enter with a clear head on an inquiry as to the variations to which the words of this part of speech are liable.—COBBETT'S GRAMMAR, 1818.

But thou, the more he varies forms, beware  
To strain his fetters with a stricter care.

—DRYDEN'S "VIRGIL."

"There are a few interesting survivals which resist all tendency to uniformity."

The large number of verbs, and the almost unlimited freedom with which we can obtain them from other parts of speech, is out of all proportion to the use made of verbs.—M. SCHELE DE VERE.

In the Grammar of life the great verbs are To Be and To Do.—JOHN A. STEWART.

The verb is the only part of speech which is absolutely essential to sentence formation. A subject may be a pronoun, a phrase or a clause, as well as a noun, or it may be omitted, as in imperative sentences. But if the verb is lacking there is no sentence.

The office of the verb is to supply the asserting element to the predicate. But most verbs contain also the idea to be predicated either wholly or in part. The verb *be*, however, in a general or definitive sentence, is

sometimes pure verb and simply connects the predicated idea to the subject, as, "God is love."

Verbs are either complete or incomplete on two lines of division. A verb is copulative or attributive, according as it is a copula for an outside attribute, as, "She seems happy," or contains within itself the chief idea to be predicated, as, "He runs fast."

Verbs are also either transitive or intransitive, according as they take an object or are used without an object.

There is one important class of verbs, known as auxiliaries, that have some very distinct grammatical properties. (See Chapter 34.)

There are forms derived from verbs, called verbals, or more definitely, participles and infinitives. While these retain some of the meaning and modifiers of the verbs from which they are derived, their grammatical nature is that of some other part of speech rather than that of the true verb. (See Chapters 39, 40 and 41.)

Verbs have a slight amount of inflection for mood, tense, number and person. In the two latter points some verbal forms show agreement with their subjects.

The student of grammar needs a knowledge of the few inflectional forms that a verb can take, and for every verb he needs to know certain fundamental forms called the principal parts.

Some of the older English verbs have distinct forms in the present, past, and past participle, from which all the other forms are regularly derived, as *do*, *did*, *done*.

From *do* are derived the words *doing*, *doest*, *dost*, *doeth*, *doth* and *does*; also certain phrases, as *may do*, *will do*, *have been doing*, etc. From the past form *did*, the form *didst* alone is derived. *Done* (called the past participle though never used as a participle except with a passive meaning) enters into a large number of verbal phrases both active and passive, such as, *has done*, *will be done*, *having done*, etc. In order, therefore, to have a mastery of the English verb, these three forms, the present, past, and past participle, must be known, after which all other forms can be regularly made by the use of terminations or auxiliaries.

The past and past participle of many verbs are regularly formed by adding *ed* to the present. Such verbs are called regular or weak verbs, and all new verbs added to English are regular. If all verbs were regular there would be no principal parts to be studied in grammar. The infinitive or name form of the verb would be all that would need to be given to make its forms available for use. The principal parts that require the attention of grammar students, therefore, are those that are formed in some other way than by the *ed* termination, and these belong wholly to verbs of the old Saxon vocabulary.

There are a few defective verbs that are lacking in one or more of their principal parts. Most of the auxiliaries are of this class. The verb *be* has principal parts derived from different roots and is the most irregular verb in English. *Go* also has different roots in its principal parts.

The classification of verbs according to the method of forming their principal parts gives two great groups whose forms represent the two conjugations of English verbs. (See Chapter 33.)

## XXXIII

### THE TWO CONJUGATIONS OF ENGLISH VERBS

Language, like the rocks, is strewn with the fossilized wrecks of former conditions of society.—SAYCE.

“A frequent recognition of the historical element is necessary to a true understanding of English grammar.”

The dying out of forms and sounds is looked upon by etymologists with painful feeling; but no unprejudiced judge will be able to see in it anything but a progressive victory over lifeless material.—KRAUTER.

The terms *strong* and *weak* were first applied to verbs for a somewhat fanciful reason; the strong verbs were so called because they seemed to form the preterite term out of their own resources without calling to their aid any ending. The weak verbs were so called because they were incapable of forming their preterites without the aid of the ending *ed*, *d*, or *t*.—KITTRIDGE AND ARNOLD.

The terms strong and weak preterites in all our better grammars have put out of use the wholly misleading terms of irregular and regular.—TRENCH.

A strong verb is really just as regular as a weak verb; that is to say, all strong verbs form their preterites in accordance with definite rules and not in obedience to mere chance. To ascertain these rules, however, requires a long study, not merely of the English language but of several other languages, like German and the Scandinavian tongue, with which English is closely related. The student who is beginning the study of English Grammar, therefore, must learn the forms of the strong verbs as separate facts, without

much regard to the reasons for their existence.—KITTREDGE AND ARNOLD.

The history of the English verb is, from one point of view, the history of a conflict between the weak and the strong conjugations in which the former steadily tended for three centuries to become the one exclusively in use. A satisfactory account of the later history of the strong conjugation has been made a task of no slight difficulty in consequence of the irregularities that appear in many verbs, and the seemingly capricious changes that have taken place in their inflection at different periods.—LOUNSBURY.

Verbs are divided according to their manner of forming their principal parts into two great classes, called strong and weak verbs. The strong verbs form their past tense and sometimes their past participle by changing the vowel of the root, as *sing, sang, sung*. They take no additional ending in the past tense. This vowel change is allied to the German modified vowel or *umlaut*. — The past participle of these verbs formerly took the ending *en*, and this is still found in some of the verbs of this class, as *tread, trod, trodden*. The form in *en* is sometimes retained in adjective formations, after it has been dropped in the participial use, as in *misshapen*.

The weak verbs do not change the vowel of the root, but they make the past tense and the past participle by adding *d*, *t*, or *ed* to the root, as *spill, spilled or spilt*. A few verbs that are classed with weak verbs have also a vowel change in the past, as *tell, told*. In general, the test of a weak verb is that it has a *d* or *t* in the past that does not occur in the present.

The name strong signifies that the verb makes its

principal parts within its own root, while the weak verbs are incapable of this and require the additional ending. There seems to be an affinity between strong and intransitive verbs, though some of the most common of the strong verbs (as *do* and *see*) are transitive. Most of the transitive verbs, however, are of the weak type.

The names Old Conjugation and New Conjugation are also frequently given to these two great types of verbs. They have also been called (by Sweet and other grammarians) vowel verbs and consonant verbs. In some grammars the two great types are called irregular and regular verbs. The name regular is a convenient one to apply to the modern verbal forms that end strictly in *ed*. Yet there are many irregularities in the weak type of verbs. The lists of irregular verbs given in the older grammars include very many that are now seen to belong to the new or weak conjugation. The terms strong and weak are more distinctive in describing the type to which a verb belongs than the words irregular and regular.

The forms of the strong verbs are also regular according to the principles of old English, though not made in accordance with the present active rule for verb formation.

Although the strong verbs are now treated as one conjugation of English verbs, they include various types of vowel changes. They are really the survivals of several ancient Saxon conjugations whose differences can still be noted, and to some extent classified. In their past participles there are three vowel types:

First, like the infinitive—*come, came, come.*  
Second, like the past tense—*find, found, found.*  
Third, distinct from either—*sing, sang, sung.*

There is a tendency on the part of strong verbs to adopt newer and weak forms. Thus *glide* and *creep* were formerly strong verbs. In a few verbs this change has been only partly accomplished and they are known as mixed verbs, as *swell, swelled, swollen.* Weak verbs which have also a vowel change in the past (as *tell, told; seek, sought*) are also a type of mixed verbs in which the two ways of forming the preterite are combined. Both the strong and weak forms of a verb are often in use, and sometimes with different meanings, as,

Hang, hung, hung.  
Hang, hanged, hanged.

More than a hundred verbs originally strong have passed over wholly or in part to the weak conjugation. Also more than a hundred strong verbs have dropped out of the language and weak verbs derived from the Norman-French have taken their place.

Of the two forms of weak verbs in *d* and *t*, the forms in *t* have usually been regarded as somewhat archaic. They have often been used by poets, not in the interests of simplified spelling but because the archaic appearance added poetic flavor to the verse. In verbs having both forms in common use the form in *t* is more frequently found in participial relations than in the past tense. In some instances the older participial form in *t* has become a pure adjective (as *past, blest*) thus gaining a clear grammatical distinction from the usual verb form.

In not a few weak verbs the forms spelled with *d* are necessarily pronounced with a *t* sound, as *grasped*, *crushed*, etc. Among the three hundred words for which the Simplified Spelling Board advocate a revised spelling there are the past tenses of seventy-three weak verbs which phonetically require *t* rather than *d*. There are some difficulties in the full application of this principle. Some of these past tenses (as *past*, *blest*, *rapt*, *carest*) suggest to the mind other words of like spelling. A few verbs requiring the *t* sound (as *hope* and *hop*) are omitted from the list, probably because of more complex ambiguities.

On the whole, this return to the original and more phonetic verbal form has good sense in its favor, and for careful students of pronunciation the change is not difficult to make. Yet it can scarcely be expected that persons trained in the grammars of the last generation (which spelt almost all weak verbs with *d* rather than *t*) will at present distinguish perfectly between the phonetic differences of such verbs as *lived* and *wisht*, *lookt* and *showed*.

There are twenty or more verbs in English which end in *t*, and have no change for their principal parts, such as *bet*, *burst*, *cast*, *cost*, *cut*, *bit*, *put*, etc. These are classed in the older grammars as irregular verbs. Most of them, however, are really verbs of the weak type from which the weak ending has dropped away. Several of them, however, as *burst* and *let*, are historically allied to the strong conjugation.

All new verbs added to English are of the weak con-

jugation. The weak forms of verbs are by no means all new, however. Some of the oldest verbs in the language are of this weak type. Indeed the weak conjugation itself is simply one of the Saxon conjugations which has been adopted for all the newer verb formations of English.

The strong verbs of English are a limited and dwindling class, but they add much to the charm and variety of the language.

There are many interesting survivals of old irregular verbal forms in the language used by elderly people or in out-of-the-way localities. To find one of these in an unexpected quarter is a delight to the antiquarian student of language. It is also a matter of interest to notice how little children unconsciously form irregular past tenses and participles, according to the ancient pattern, as, "If a bee *stang* you, what would you do?" The poets also with true poetic spirit are fond of reviving these older forms, which add much to the poetic style by their archaic flavor.

## XXXIV

### AUXILIARY VERBS

The richness and flexibility of English in its auxiliary forms is one of its most striking characteristics.—JOYNES.

When a full verb is associated with an auxiliary it is always made into a verbal, so that the function of predication is transferred to the auxiliary. If more than one auxiliary is used, only one of these keeps its finite form; all the others are verbals.—SWEET.

The auxiliary is always the verb form, the finite predicate; to say auxiliary and verb is an error.—JOYNES.

Our auxiliary verbs give us a power which the ancients with all their varieties of mood and inflections of tense could never attain.—SOUTHEY.

There is a small but very important class of verbs that are not used alone as complete predicates but are combined with the participles and infinitives of other verbs to make verb phrases. Most of the so-called verbal inflections of voice, mood, and tense are made in this way. The final participle or infinitive in the phrase expresses the principal idea and is sometimes called the principal verb. Yet it is the first auxiliary that has the assertive power and is the true finite verb. Thus “may have been done” is a phrase of the verb *do*, but the first auxiliary *may* is the asserting word.

But while the auxiliary retains the power of predication, its original meaning has been greatly modified and

is sometimes almost or entirely lost in the combined verb form. The following participle or infinitive also loses some of its distinctive character in the blending of forms. A participle loses some of its adjective character and an infinitive is not preceded by *to*.

The amount of specialized meaning that is retained, however, differs greatly in the different auxiliaries. For this reason they are treated in very different ways by grammarians, some of whom restrict the term *auxiliary* to those having no distinctive meaning of their own, but whose office is entirely structural or functional. It seems convenient, however, to consider together all the verbs that have more or less of the auxiliary character.

The verbs used as auxiliaries are *be*, *have*, *do*, *shall*, *will*, *may*, *can*, *must*, *might*, *could*, *would*, and *should*.

*Let*, and sometimes also *need* and *dare*, resemble the auxiliaries in not requiring *to* before the following infinitive. *Ought* retains *to* but is similar in meaning to some of the auxiliaries, and like them is defective in its principal parts.

*Be*, *have*, *do*, and *will* are used also as principal verbs with definite meanings. They have participles and infinitives of their own and can themselves take auxiliaries. *May* and *can* also retain to some extent their own meanings when in combination. *May*, *can*, *must*, *might*, *could*, *would*, and *should*, are often called the modal auxiliaries, since they take the place of a mood inflection. *Must* is usually indicative, expressing a necessary fact rather than a contingent one. The

other modals are potential, and some of them are often subjunctive in character.

*Be* is the most important and most widely used of all the auxiliaries. It occurs in all passive and progressive verb phrases. *Have* is also very extended in its use, occurring in the perfect tense forms, but with its original meaning almost wholly lost. In the older English, *be* was used with intransitive verbs where we now use *have*. The idiom is still sometimes used, as, “I am arrived.” *Do* as an auxiliary has lost its original meaning. Its chief use is to supply an auxiliary to a phrase that seems to need one, either for emphasis, as, “I *did* make the effort,” or for reasons of word order, as in interrogative and negative sentences. In the older English, *did* was often used as an auxiliary without emphasis, as, “The Serpent beguiled me and I *did* eat,” “It *did* address itself to motion.”—HAMLET.

The use of auxiliaries is a modern form of language growth. It is most highly developed in English. German and the other Teutonic languages, however, have similar sets of modal auxiliaries, though these differ considerably from those of English in their idiomatic usages.

Auxiliaries have been one of the most potent factors in the change of English from an inflectional to a highly analytic language. They give great freedom and wide range of expression and also furnish many of the idiomatic mysteries that make English difficult to foreigners. The study of the auxiliaries gives a large and interesting field for philological investigation.

## XXXV

### VERB PHRASES

What is the use of teaching the child that successions of words, each of which has its own meaning, and any two of which may be separated at pleasure by the introduction of other words, each of which has also, no more and no less, its own meaning, are voices, moods, and tenses?—RICHARD GRANT WHITE.

A conjugation of the verb can hardly be said to exist. We have laid aside not only the passive and middle voice, the optative and other moods of Greek verbs, but we have abandoned also the many tenses of the Latin verb which the Romance languages still retain. And after thus stripping the verb of all power to express tense and mood the tendency of our day is to free it more and more even of its connection with person.—M. SCHELE DE VERE.

We should draw a distinct line between the genuine inflection of the verb and those verbal phrases, “compound forms,” by which the scheme of conjugation is in part filled up.—WHITNEY.

The amount of true inflection that belongs to the verb in English is exceedingly small. There are inflectional changes for the past tense, the third person singular of the present tense, and each of the two participles. There are ancient forms used with the subject *thou* in all the modes and tenses. If we add several irregularities of the verb *be* we have well-nigh covered the true inflection of English verbs.

To state the same thought in another way: An English verb—with the one exception of the verb *be*—can have only eight distinct forms, as, *write*, *writest*, *writeth*, *writes*, *writing*, *wrote*, *wrotest*, *written*. Three of these (*writest*, *writeth*, and *wrotest*) are practically obsolete. In regular verbs only four forms are in common use, as, *sail*, *sails*, *sailing*, *sailed*.

Most of the so-called verb-forms are phrases made by uniting participles and infinitives with the auxiliary verbs. In any verb phrase the first word has the assertive power and is the true verb, though the last word expresses the most significant idea and gives the name to the phrase. Thus, “I have seen” is a phrase of *see*, but *have* is the asserting word. The phrase can also be separated by adverbial words which are no part of the phrase but have their own distinct meaning and use, as, “He will *probably* be elected.”

The method of the older grammars in conjugating a verb with various subjects through all the phrase forms of the moods and tenses had little value as a school exercise. Pupils should be able, however, to recognize all the classes of verb phrases. These may be grouped as follows:

Passive—formed by the auxiliary *be* with the past participle.

Perfect—known by the auxiliary *have* and found in both voices.

Future—having the auxiliary *will* or *shall*.

Potential—known by the potential auxiliaries, *may*, *can*, *must*, *might*, *could*, *would*, and *should*.

**Progressive**—formed by the present participle with the auxiliary *be*.

**Emphatic or Interrogative**—containing the auxiliary *do*, and found in the present and past tenses.

Students should be able to name verb phrases, applying these terms. Thus "shall have been seen" is a future perfect passive verb phrase. "May have been running" is a perfect potential progressive verb phrase.

Although most of the verb phrases are formed after some regular pattern of a given voice, mood or tense, idiomatic phrases of more or less irregularity are of frequent occurrence. There are intransitive forms with the verb *be*, as, "He is gone," "The tower is fallen," also progressive phrases of passive meaning, as, "The house is building," and "The house is being built."

Many other irregular verb phrases are also in use, as, "I was going to do it," "I am about to write," "This is to be seen." The power to make new verb combinations is very largely developed in English.

For ordinary purposes of classification a verb phrase may be treated as a whole. Yet the practice of looking at each word in its individual relations is also of value. A full knowledge of the grammatical structure requires that the student should sometimes analyze the phrase completely. In the sentence, "He might have been seen," the verb phrase may be analyzed as follows: This is a perfect potential passive phrase of the verb *see*. "Might" is the true verb. "Have" is an infinitive, originally the object of "might." "Been" is

the past participle of *be*. "Might have been" is a copulative phrase connecting the past participle "seen" with the subject.

A synopsis of verb phrases, including one form for each mood and tense, gives a good general view of the verbal forms, and is useful in comparing English verbs with those of other languages.

## XXXVI

### THE MODAL AUXILIARIES

Six little words do claim me every day,  
*Shall, must, and can, with will and ought and may.*  
Shall is the law within inscribed by heaven,  
The goal to which I by myself am driven.  
Must is the bound not to be over-past,  
Where by the world and Nature I'm held fast.  
Can is the measure of my personal dower  
Of deed and art, science, and practised power.  
Will is my noblest crown, my brightest, best,  
Freedom's own seal upon my soul imprest,  
Ought the inscription on the seal set fair,  
On Freedom's open door, a bolt 'tis there.  
And lastly May, 'mong many courses mixed  
The vaguely possible by the moment fixed.  
*Shall, Must, and Can, with Will and Ought and May,*  
These are the six that claim me every day.  
Only when God doth teach, do I know what each day  
*I shall, I must, I can, I will, I ought, I may.*  
—TRANSLATION FROM THE GERMAN FOR *The School Journal.*

The Modals, *can, may, must, shall, will*, show special defects of verb forms. They have no personal endings, no infinitive, no participle, and hence no compound tenses, except by special idiomatic phrase (*can have done*, etc.). They cause special difficulty in the study of other languages where such forms are relatively complete and regular, the difficulty being chiefly in the English idiom. This is perhaps the chief difficulty in English.—JOYNES.

A mere declaration of ability is indicative in mood. To

term this potential would be parallel to asserting that "there are thirty sheep in the pasture" is in the thirty-sheep mood. If, however, the assertion of ability is made doubtfully, it goes into the subjunctive not because it is an assertion of doubtful ability, but because it is an assertion of ability made doubtfully.—DAVENPORT AND EMERSON.

Whether we call the contingent mood potential or subjunctive is not material.—BROWN AND DEGARMO.

There is an interesting group of verbal phrases in English with wide diversity of meanings, which are variously expressed in other languages by the conditional, optative, obligative, and subjunctive moods. In English these phrases have often been classed together as a potential mood. The German language is nearly allied to the English in having a set of verb phrases with modal auxiliaries that are similar to our own. The two languages differ widely, however, in the subtler shades of meaning which these can convey.

But the English potential forms are rapidly being withdrawn from classification as a distinct mood. They are always used with either an indicative or a subjunctive force, and may always be classed in one of these moods. Yet it is often convenient to treat this class of phrases together, under the name potential phrases, even if these are not called a distinct mood of the verb.

The chief modal auxiliaries are the present and past tenses of the defective verbs, *may*, *can*, *shall*, and *will*. The present tenses of shall and will are also the auxiliaries of the future tense, and are commonly called

the future auxiliaries. Yet the second form of the future (used to express will power or compulsion) is as truly a modal form as any of the phrases which are called potential.

*Ought, must, dare, let, need* (and a few others), have some similarity with these in meaning and use.

*Ought*, originally the past tense of *owe*, differs from the others in that it requires *to* with the following infinitive, thus making a less compact verb phrase. *Let* is used in the imperative to produce a kind of third or first person, as "Let him go," "Let us go."

It is interesting for the grammar student to search through the older literature for instances where potential words are used as principal verbs, and in their original sense, as

I will no reconcilement.—HAMLET.

I would that thou wert cold or hot.—BIBLE.

What can man's wisdom

In the restoring his bereavèd sense?—LEAR.

*May* is sometimes used with the force of *must*, as

Whose loves I may not drop.—MACBETH.

In negative sentences *cannot* is generally used rather than *may not*, as "May I go to the city?" "No, you cannot go to-day. You may go next week."

An ancient form of *might* was *mought*, as

That mought not be distinguished.—SHAKSPEARE.

*Might, could, would, and should* are often used sub-junctively, especially since the older subjunctives have

mostly disappeared. Yet the older literature also has many potential phrases used as subjunctives, as

Would I might but ever see that man.—*THE TEMPEST.*

O, could I speak the matchless worth.—*OLD HYMN.*

O, that deceit should steal such gentle shapes!—*KING RICHARD III.*

If an angel should have come to me  
And told me Hubert should put out my eyes  
I would not have believed him.—*KING JOHN.*

*Should* is especially the subjunctive auxiliary. (See Chapter 38.)

The potential phrases are sometimes classed as present and past, according to the tense form of the auxiliary itself. There are also present perfect and past perfect tense forms, made by adding *have* to the other auxiliaries. Yet the time signification does not usually correspond with these names. When used as subjunctives these auxiliaries often refer to future time. In, “How could I thus forget myself yesterday?” *could* is indicative and refers to past time as the tense form indicates. But in “How could I atone to-morrow for the fault of yesterday?” *could* is subjunctive, and refers to future time. An interesting contrast between indicative and subjunctive uses of auxiliaries is shown in the following:

“Look, what I will not, that I *cannot* do.”

“But *might* you do’t, and do the world no wrong?”

To obtain complete command of the modal auxiliaries is one of the most difficult tasks for the foreign

student of English. It is only by long usage and careful discrimination that he learns to grasp all the delicate distinctions which the "native born" seem to arrive at almost intuitively.

The idiomatic mysteries of the potential phrases are increasing in number as the evolution of language gives new occasions for the use of these auxiliaries. The intricacies have never all been formulated in grammatical statements and cannot be, but by a careful comparison of the potential forms in literature a feeling of the "genius of the language" in respect to their use can be cultivated.

## XXXVII

### SHALL AND WILL, SHOULD AND WOULD

In the first person simply *shall* foretells,  
In *will* a threat or else a promise dwells,  
*Shall* in the second and the third doth threat,  
*Will* simply then foretells a future feat.

—QUATRAIN FOUND IN AN OLD GRAMMAR.

It must be admitted that there is no absolute rule (for *shall* and *will*) given by any grammarian that will apply to all cases without leaving room for doubt.—M. SCHELE DE VERE.

Learn to say, “I shall, I should, we shall, we should.” This rule guards the switch, where pupils most easily get off the track.—TOLMAN.

“English-speaking people of Celtic origin are seldom perfect in these idiomatic usages. An educated Celt would not indeed be guilty of the Hibernianism “Will I do it?” Yet even Sir Walter Scott sometimes showed his Scotch nationality in his use of *would* and *should*.”

The distinction in the use of *shall* and *will* in forming the future tense is less carefully observed by intelligent writers and speakers of to-day than it was by those of the middle of the nineteenth century or earlier.—SOUTHWORTH.

The exact and forcible use of these two words is one of the niceties of English style—a nicety that not only furnishes a peculiar difficulty to foreigners but is also a stumbling-block to the great majority of those whose mother-tongue is English.—BLACKBURN.

Historically, *shall* is the more ancient and universal, *will* the more modern and at least primarily more rare peri-

phrastic form. With some weakening of both, the primitive meaning has not perished. The glimmering through of the latter gives to the modern tongue on the one hand occasion to avoid ambiguity, on the other to express more delicate shades of thought apart from the conventional distribution of the auxiliary verbs among the several persons.—TRANSLATED FROM MÄTZNER.

The great Shibboleth of modern speech;—the peculiar use of the auxiliaries will and shall.—JAMIESON.

In the oldest English there was no distinct form for the future tense, its place being supplied by the present. This usage is still found in modern English, as “He goes (or is going) to town to-morrow.” But from the thirteenth century *shall* and *will* have been in common use to denote future time. These words are used, however, as modal auxiliaries, as well as signs of futurity, and various grammatical distinctions must be observed regarding them.

In simple prediction (the true future tense) the auxiliaries are used in the following order for the three persons: I shall, you will, he will.

To express the speaker’s determination (the most common modal use) the order is as follows: I will, you shall, he shall.

In expressing the determination of another person one uses the same auxiliary that the person himself would use, as

He means that I shall go.

He will do it, and I cannot help it.

In expressing mere futurity by indirect speech, usage

varies. Sometimes the auxiliaries follow the usual agreement of persons, as

He seems to think that I shall be the last to leave.

You hope that you will be elected.

But there are cases where such use would convey ideas not intended. Thus, "You say that I shall regret it" gives the idea of compulsion. "He says that he will go" gives the idea of promise or purpose.

In most cases, to express another's thought, for simple futurity as well as purpose, we use the same auxiliary that he himself would use. As

You hope that I will succeed.

He fears that he shall be misunderstood.

He fears that you will be misunderstood.

Yet no absolute rule can be given that will cover all cases of indirect speech. Common sense, or the speaker's sense of idiom must be the final arbiter in many cases.

In questions, mere futurity is usually expressed by, Shall I? Shall you? Will he? ~~Shall he?~~ asks for authority. "Will you?" asks for a promise. Will is not used with the first person in interrogative sentences.

The forms in common use may be summarized as follows:

*Pure future* I shall be invited of course.

*in a statement.* You will be invited of course.

*Pure future* Shall I be invited?

*in a question.* Shall you be invited?

*Pure future* Will he be invited?

	I will have my own way.
Volition.	You will have your own way.
	He will have his own way.
	I will pay you to-morrow.
Promise.	You shall be paid to-morrow.
	He shall be paid to-morrow.
Compulsion	He says that I shall do it.
or	Thou shalt not steal.
Command.	He shall suffer for this.

The most common mistake in usage is in the first person, and consists in using *will* when no special volition, but mere futurity, is to be expressed, as "I will probably be there." The checking of this tendency in those who have a weak sense of idiom is a practical part of the teacher's work.

Yet there are instances where only a slight element of volition or purpose is intended; and in these cases persons of unlike temperaments may differ in their choice of the auxiliary. A person of straightforward, positive nature, may say "*will*," where one with a more suave or yielding disposition prefers "*shall*"; as "I will be there if the weather is fine"; or, "I shall be there if the weather is fine."

#### HISTORICAL CHANGES IN USE

The foregoing statements cover the important practical rules regarding *shall* and *will*. Yet students will be aided in keeping these grammatical distinctions by noting the original meaning of the words, and knowing something of their history as signs of the future tense. For the benefit of those who would enter more

deeply into this difficult subject, some account of the historical change in usage is here appended.

*Shall* means *to owe*, *to be obliged*, and its subject usually names one who is controlled by outside influence. The original idea in *shall* was more of duty than of command. Chaucer used the word in the original sense: "For by the faith I shal to God, etc."

A curious outgrowth of the meaning of *shall* is found in the word "Shilly-shally," which is applied to the action of one who cannot make up his mind, but asks continually, "Shall I?" "Shall I?" The word may perhaps be traced to an old sentence from Congreve: "I don't stand shill—I—shall—I; if I say't, I'll do't."

*Will* means *to determine*, and its subject originally named one who controlled the action. The primary sense of the two words is closely followed in a sentence by Gibbon: "If you will call, my servant shall show you the book."

It will be seen that neither of the two words is entirely colorless as a mere future auxiliary. The idea of volition in *will*, and that of compulsion in *shall*, argue against such use. The German language is fortunate in having an auxiliary *werden*, that can express mere becoming without any extraneous idea.

While the original meanings of *shall* and *will* greatly affect their use in modern English, the words vary very much in their force, and sometimes seem to be used without any special force. Thus *will* in the third person, unless emphasized, is entirely void of any meaning except that of a mere future, as

"Christmas will soon be here."

It may even be used without the sense of futurity. Thus, "He will often go to the river at the hour of sunset," denotes a customary, rather than a future action.

Yet, in spite of the modern weakening of the idea of volition in *will*, the general verdict of English-speaking people has usually been that *shall* is less inconsistent than *will* with the pure future meaning. The idea of compulsion includes that of fate or destiny, and a pre-destined event is not very different from a future event. At a very early date *shall* began to lose its original meaning, its inflectional forms, and its use as a principal verb. *Will*, on the other hand, is still in use as an independent verb with past tense and participial forms, and in its auxiliary use the original idea is more distinctly retained than is the case with *shall*. At a very early date *shall* became the common future auxiliary except for cases where volition was to be expressed.

But there is also some counter argument to this preference for *shall*. In both the second and third persons the compulsive idea proves a bar to the use of *shall* as a mere future auxiliary. So a rule prescribing such use presents the curious phenomenon of having the exceptions twice as numerous as the regular cases; and for all these exceptions *will* is the auxiliary employed. Also, since a voluntary choice is likely to be carried out, *will* at an early day began to be employed not only when choice was intended, but sometimes when little or no volition was really exercised.

There have therefore always been two opposing

No. 726 and related entries to this description

which self appointed

lines of thinking, each having some foundation in reason. Although the one giving *will* the right of way in cases of doubt has never been generally sustained by scholars, certain modern writers on grammar have openly favored it. (See Ramsey's *Grammar*. Putnam's Sons. 1892.)

*I will*, they tell us, is more direct and frank than *I shall*. *Shall*, they would say, is an imperious word. Let us not use *shall* when a better word can be found. So they would make the voluntary future "I *will* arise and go to my father, the common future, reserving the involuntary future, as, "I *shall* go to him, but he *shall* not return to me," for those cases where lack of volition is conspicuous.

Although this position has never been endorsed by most grammarians, it is supported by a considerable amount of current usage. The people of Scotland and Ireland often use "*I will*" where grammarians would say "*I shall*." And in different sections of America to-day people variously say "*I will* be in Cleveland to-morrow," or, "*I shall* be in Boston to-morrow."

Professor Tolman, of Chicago, has suggested that the large German element in the population of the Western States, may partly account for the fact that *will* and *would* have become in some localities the words of all work.

In the historical development of the English language there have been some curious and marked changes in the usage of these words at different periods; but the history clearly shows that *shall* has, at least his-

torically, the right to be considered the primary auxiliary in pure future phrases. The changes in use have been carefully traced in a pamphlet by Prof. F. A. Blackburn, of Chicago, entitled *The English Future; Its Origin and Development*. Leipsic (1882).

Before the Norman Conquest *shall* and *will* were occasionally used, but only in their original meaning. A little later, phrases began to appear in a sense approaching that of the future tense, but *shall* occurs more often than *will*. By the thirteenth century the new future phrase had mostly superseded the old present tense usage.

But for more than a century *shall* became more and more the prevailing word. In some writings of the fourteenth century it is three or four times as frequent as *will*. It is used in all persons, but especially in the second and third persons. In the third person *shall* seems to have been nearly twelve times as frequent as *will*. The latter auxiliary, when found, is almost always in the first person, where a sense of volition can easily be understood, though it is often difficult to determine how much volition it was intended to express.

During the fourteenth century people began to see a logical consistency in the use of *will* for the future, especially as offering a distinction from the compulsive force of *shall* in the second and third persons. So the floodtide of *shall* was gradually in a measure swept away by an influx of *will*.

In the time of Wycliffe, *shall* was at its height as the

chief future auxiliary, though in Wycliffe's gospels *will* occurs sometimes with an indefinite future force. Tyndale's version shows an increase in the number of times *will* is used. But this increase is mostly in the first person, showing the gradual establishment of two forms in the first person, a mere future, and a voluntary future. In Tyndale's Testament, *shall* is still the ordinary word in the third person future. Our common version of the Bible is founded largely on Tyndale's version, and in it "*I shall*" is a very uncommon phrase. Yet the Bible abounds in *shall* phrases for all future events, as

- "It shall come to pass in the last days, etc."
- "Nation shall rise against nation."
- "Neither shall they learn war any more."
- "Thou shalt endure, and thy years shall not fail."

This use of *shall* in the third person, though originally an ordinary future (to be replaced mostly by *will* in a later age), has been called by modern grammarians the "shall of prophecy."

Even after *will* had to some degree supplanted *shall*, Shakespeare and later writers continued to use *shall* in all three persons to denote inevitable futurity, as

My country shall have more vices than it had before.—**MACBETH.**

Whoever shall practice physicke not having these aforesaid sciences shall kill more than he shall save.—**BREVIARY OF HEALTH.** 1575.

Sir Thomas More, in one sentence declares six times

that Christ “shall” do certain specified things.

The “shall of prophecy” is still to be found in modern English, and poets continue to use *shall* in some cases where the prose writers say *will*.

It seems evident that in the historical development of future forms it was *shall* that first lost its original meaning and became the future auxiliary, afterwards dividing the ground with *will* in the first person, so as to enrich the language with two forms, a pure future, and a mixed, or indefinite future in that person. It was at a much later date that *will*, having become weakened in force, replaced *shall* as a pure future for the second and third persons, leaving to *shall* its original modal office of expressing compulsive action.

A very different explanation of the *shall* and *will* usages has, however, found its way into modern thought. It is sometimes said that “the extreme modesty of modern times” forbids the use of “I will,” except in extraordinary circumstances, as expressing too much self-assertion. “I shall,” however, gives us a phrase by which we may shirk all responsibility. In other words we are permitted to say “I shall,” and avoid the question of egoism suggested by “I will,” since the speaker is merely the humble instrument of events.

The fallacy in this reasoning is that “I will” is assumed to be the original and natural first person future, whereas we have seen that this is not the case.

But while this cannot be taken as the explanation of our future phrase forms, the principle here suggested

throws some light upon certain delicate points of modern usage.

The principles to be employed, it may be said, are not merely those of grammar, but also of politeness. *Will* in the first person must always have a touch of volition, and *shall* in the second person gives emphasis to authority. But courtesy demands that both authority and self-assertion be avoided whenever needless. The person in command does well to say, not "You shall," but "You will please do this"; as if predicting that it will please you to do it of your own accord. The euphemism deceives no one. "You will please" is known to be "merely the glove that covers the hand of power." But we like the princes and potentates better if they make their authority unobtrusive. So the conventional form for a military order has become, "You will report to the headquarters of the commanding general," etc.

Without denying the true history of the idiom of the future tense, one may agree in a sense with the thought expressed by Archbishop Hare, that "the present law of the future may be interpreted on ethical grounds. When speaking in the first person we speak submissively, but in the second and third persons we speak courteously."

As a delicate application of the same principle in interrogative sentences, it is sometimes felt that "Shall you?" belittles the person addressed by assuming that he has no volition in his own acts. "Will you?" however, gives the appearance of a request. But if anyone

considers these two forms as the opposing horns of a dilemma, he has the alternative of falling back upon another interrogative form that is more colorless than either. Instead of saying "Shall you be at the meeting to-night?" or "Will you be at the meeting to-night?" we may use the present tense as in Old English, and say, "Are you going to the meeting to-night?"

#### SHOULD AND WOULD

The intricate principles that govern the use of *shall* and *will* are applicable also to *should* and *would*. Yet these latter words have some additional distinctions that are all their own and that make the uncertainties even greater than those of *shall* and *will*.

*Should* and *would* are primarily the past tenses of *shall* and *will*, as,

I think I shall.  
I thought I should.  
I think I will.  
I thought I would.

But *should* (far more than *shall*) retains the original idea of *ought*. "You should do it" means "You ought to do it."

Perhaps the most important use of *should*, however, is in such conditional clauses as "Should you do so, you will regret it." In modern English conditional clauses with *should* have largely taken the place of the old subjunctives.

*Would* often gives the idea of habitual action, as

"The squire would often fall asleep in his pew."

It may also denote a wish. This is sometimes called its optative or subjunctive use, as "Would to God I had died for thee."

*Should* and *would* are sometimes merely softened forms of *shall* and *will*, as

I shall like it if you will go.

I should like it if you would go.

"I should be cautious," etc., merely means "It is well to be cautious." "It should seem," and "It would seem" are both modestly used in the sense of "It seems." An interesting distinction in the use of *should* and *would* is disclosed by a comparison of the sentences:

If I should go there, I should return soon.

If you should go there, you would return soon.

If he should go there, he would return soon.

We see that in the principal or indicative clause, the auxiliaries follow the law of the future tense, while in the hypothetical clause *should* is used in all three persons.

The use of these words in questions also presents some slightly different considerations from those which apply to *shall* and *will*. The confusions in their use are greater than those of *shall* and *will*, and they seem to be increasing, as apparently antagonistic principles seem to be controlling the language development of these idioms.

An attempt to summarize the principles that control the use of *should* and *would* may be made as follows:

When *should* and *would* are used as true past tenses for *shall* and *will* (that is, when they express either mere futurity or a definite determination in some past time) they follow the same order for the three persons that belongs to *shall* and *will*, as

I feared I should fall.

I hoped you would succeed.

I expected that he would have it.

But if a hypothetical or subjunctive idea is to be introduced *should* becomes the preferred auxiliary, thus

If I should.

If you should.

If he should.

Yet the principles of euphemism or of courtesy that can modify the choice of *shall* and *will* (leading us to avoid needless egoism in the first person as well as needless compulsion in the second and third)—while they affect also the choice of *should* and *would*, are felt to be less strenuous in their application to these derived forms. Thus “I thought I would fall,” while held to be incorrect by a person of keen grammatical sense, carries less of emphasis on the unintended idea of *willing* than is given by “I will fall.” For this reason many persons, in expressing actions which may be the result of a degree of volition (though without intending to lay special emphasis on this idea) use *would* where others prefer *should*, as “I thought I would (or should) go to Boston before the end of the season.”

*Should*, in the sense of *ought* is used for all three persons, as

I know I should do it.

I think you should do it.

He should do it, but he may not.

In such cases the word is often emphasized.

Although these principles seem complex, the number of cases in which native-born users of English can go grammatically wrong is not numerous. Whenever a sense of obligation or of compulsion is to be made prominent, one naturally uses *should*, and if volition is to be emphasized, *would* is used intuitively.

If one can learn to use "I should," "we should," in those instances when it is not desirable to lay emphasis on one's own volitions, he can scarcely make a serious grammatical error. It is true that there remains a large area of cases in which certain persons use *should* and others *would*, (as in the second person of questions, "Should you like to go?" "Would you like to go?") but the difference is not so much due to disregard of grammatical principle as to a difference in people's preferences on the question of hiding or obtruding the slight element of volition that is involved. If an action is voluntary at the moment the speaker must be allowed a certain degree of choice in the matter of bringing this volition into notice.

So long as even the "native born" are not entirely agreed as to the idiomatic use of these four auxiliaries it is not strange that for foreign students of English the difficulties go deeper. The mistakes made by

foreigners often remind us of the merry tale of the Frenchman who declared, "I will drown; nobody shall help me." Yet the absurdity lies not so much in the blundering use of the English idiom as in the inconsistencies of the language itself which lead to this confusion.

It is impossible for the ordinary grammar text-book to deal with these four auxiliaries exhaustively. One English writer, Sir E. W. Head, has written an entire book on the subject of "*Shall and Will*." Yet the important points can easily be mastered and applied by one who has a sense of grammatical idiom and will give the matter discriminating attention.

A good exercise for grammar students consists in searching for these words in literature and interpreting their use by the original meaning of the words and the historic changes in their application.

A suggestive quotation on the subject may be taken from the writings of Richard Grant White, who says: "I do not know in English literature another passage in which the distinction between *shall* and *will*, and *would* and *should*, is at once so elegantly, so variously, so precisely, and so compactly illustrated as in the following lines from a song in Sir George Etheridge's *She Would if She Could* (1704).

"How long I shall love him I can no more tell  
Than had I a fever when I should be well.  
My passion shall kill me before I will show it,  
And yet I would give all the world did he know it.  
But oh, how I sigh, when I think, should he woo me  
I cannot refuse what I know would undo me."

## XXXVIII

### THE SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD\*

"The subjunctive is not a simple mood, but a composite form, the wreck of two moods."

In English the distinctions between thought forms and fact forms are to a great extent levelled.—SWEET.

Just how rare this usage now is may be seen from the fact that in ten representative volumes by recent writers of high reputation, containing approximately 900,000 words, there are said to be only 269 instances of the subjunctive use of the verb *be* and only fifteen instances of the subjunctive of any other verb than *be*.—FROM *The Author*. London, 1897.

The same feeling of doubt or indeterminateness that characterizes the subjunctive is often conveyed to the form now assigned to the indicative. The conditional force in the two differs in degree rather than in kind.—SOUTHWORTH.

The subjunctive mood has so nearly died out of every-day English that it becomes a questionable and hazardous proceeding to give to the subjunctive idea a distinct metaphysical existence, and then to use this fictitious entity to conjure with.—TOLMAN.

If we lose the subjunctive verb it will certainly be a grievous impoverishment to our living language, were it only for its value in giving variation to diction, and I make bold to assert that the writer who helps to keep it up deserves public gratitude.—JOHN EARLE.

The discriminating use of the subjunctive lends a grace and delicacy to the expression of thought, of which the most finished writers of to-day gladly avail themselves.—SOUTHWORTH.

\*Allen's School Grammar (Heath and Co.) gives a full treatment of the uses of the subjunctive mood.

"The poet will not relinquish the subjunctive mood. He knows its value too well."

It is not many years since text-books in grammar conjugated the subjunctive mood like the indicative with the conjunction *if* prefixed. These older grammars also added a subjunctive *form*, but the student was left to infer that the essence of the subjunctive mood lay somehow in a conjunction.

No text-book or teacher in good standing to-day would endorse this absurdity. In the treatment of the subject at present, many grammars lay chief emphasis upon the fact that the subjunctive mood is seldom heard in modern English. Both teacher and text-book sometimes say virtually to the young student, "The subjunctive mood is so nearly obsolete that it is scarcely worth our while to consider it."

Yet the subjunctive *were* is still a required form of the English language. It is used to express a pure hypothesis that is known to be contrary to facts, as

Would that he were here.

If I were a Frenchman (I am not) I might think differently.

Another subjunctive form that is less common than *were*, but is not going out of use, is the present subjunctive *be* in the hypothesis of a scientific demonstration. Our text-books still say:

"If the triangle A be superimposed on the triangle B," etc., and "If a pendulum be drawn to one side it will swing to the other."

The verb *be* has another old subjunctive form, *wert*

(the indicative being *wast*), used with a subject of the second person singular. But this, like its subject pronoun, *thou*, only occurs in the solemn style or in poetical writings.

Other verbs have a subjunctive form in the third person singular, as, "If it rain to-morrow, you cannot go." But this is now exceedingly rare in spoken English, and even in prose writings it is seldom met with. It is still, however, the preferred form of poetry.

Although the subjunctive *were* (the only common subjunctive in spoken English) has the form of the past tense, it has, when thus used, no reference to past time.

To express a similar hypothesis in relation to past time, *had* may be used either with or without the conjunction *if*, as

| Had the boat capsized, all would have been lost.  
| If the boat had capsized all would have been lost.

*Had*, with *if*, has sometimes an indicative sense, however, as

If he had already left the room that alters the case.

A subjunctive verb is generally found in a subordinate clause following one of the conjunctions, *if*, *though*, *until*, *lest*, or *that*.

It may express

(1) A condition or hypothesis, as

If thou have power to raise him, bring him hither.

I HENRY IV.

(2) A purpose, as

"Gather up the fragments that nothing be lost."

(3) A future contingency, as

"Come down ere my child die."

"If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"

(4) An indirect question, as

"Ye shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God."

In some of these instances the subjunctive would now be replaced by an indicative or a potential form.

But although the subjunctive is most frequently found in subordinate clauses, it is not confined to these. It is used in principal clauses to express a consequence, of which the hypothesis may or may not be expressed, as

It were madness to attempt it.

It had been so with us, had we been there.

Returning were as tedious as go o'er.—MACBETH.

Modern English generally uses *would* instead of these subjunctives of consequence.

But the most frequent use of the subjunctive in principal clauses, occurs in a class of sentences that have a general exclamatory character, and are used with either an imperative or an optative force, as

Heaven forgive him!

Thy kingdom come.

Strike we a blow for freedom!

Come one, come all.

Sit we down, and hear Bernardo speak of this.  
Be it resolved:

Sentences of this class which express a wish, have sometimes been classed together as an optative mood. Modern English generally uses *may* or *let* for sentences of this kind, as "Let us strike a blow for freedom!" Other grammarians would class these sentences with the imperatives, yet the true imperative is usually considered as belonging only to the second person. It seems reasonable to group together all the peculiar *thought forms* of the verb (as distinguished from the indicative or *fact* forms), and there seems to be no serious objection to making the term, subjunctive mood, cover these optative and exclamatory phrases also.

The tendency of modern English is against the subjunctive in many cases where the bias of the older English was in favor of its use. Both the indicative and the potential forms have been extended in application as the subjunctive has dropped out of use.

Modern English uses the indicative in most cases where the hypothetical or doubtful character of the statement is not clearly and emphatically marked. In the expression of future uncertainties, there are still cases where either the indicative or subjunctive may be considered legitimate, yet in which the potential (or conditional) auxiliary *should* is to be preferred to either. Thus, "If he go" is correct in poetry, and "If he goes" is the common spoken form; but "If he should go" (since it expresses more doubt than "If he goes"), is the best substitute for the older subjunctive mood.

The reasons for the rarity of the subjunctive in modern English are chiefly two:

(1) A growing carelessness in discriminating between thought-form and fact-form, which has led to the actual loss (in some cases) of the subjunctive forms themselves.

(2) The large development of the auxiliary formations. These being more specific than the subjunctive have in large measure taken its place.

But although the subjunctive is rare in modern English, the student should remember that the occasional and peculiar forms of language still in good use, are those which it is most needful to study. So long as Shakespeare and the King James's version of the Bible retain their present value, it is going to be needful for the grammar student to understand the subjunctive mood.

Nor is its modern literary use unimportant. There is many a line in modern poetry and hymn literature that would become prosaic if the mode of the verb were changed to the indicative.

As examples of this literary use we may quote:

Then Heaven tries the earth if it be in tune.—LOWELL.

To fight were deadly peril.—SCOTT.

For if the flour be fresh and sound,

And if the bread be light and sweet,

Who careth in what mill 'twas ground?—LONGFELLOW.

If happiness have not her seat

And center in the breast

We may be wise, or rich, or great

But never can be blest.—BURNS.

As we look back into the earlier English literature we find more abundant examples, not only in poetry but in prose as well. The student of grammar should explore the fields of literature for illustrations of the subjunctive mood. He will find instances, however, which were properly considered as subjunctives by the older grammarians, but which it is hardly worth while to class with these at present. The forms of the indicative and the subjunctive in some tenses, were never distinct. In advanced classes it may be worth while to try to distinguish the subjunctive from the indicative by historical and logical tests, even when the forms are identical. But for the ordinary purposes of elementary grammar it is enough for the student to recognize the peculiar subjunctive forms in the English which he studies and uses, and to see the principles which have led to this use.

The intelligent use of the subjunctive is one of the niceties of expression, even in modern speech and writing. It often gives a slightly different meaning to a phrase. A striking example is shown in the language of formal acts and resolves, as

*"Resolved, That the Superintendent be, and is hereby instructed to do"* so and so.

The teacher of grammar should recognize the loss of subjunctive forms in modern English. But he should not forget that it is possible, by unduly emphasizing the fact, to hasten its departure, causing real impoverishment of the language.

## XXXIX

### PARTICIPLES

Buehler treats infinitives and participles as separate parts of speech. Will this prove to be an application of the maxim "Divide and conquer"?—TOLMAN.

The participle is the most delicate part of speech in the language, and as such is the one most frequently abused or maltreated.—ARLO BATES.

Pronouns and participles — both elusive, and both requiring most careful supervision to prevent their establishing with other parts of speech relations which cannot for a moment be allowed without scandal.—ARLO BATES.

In verb phrases compounded with *have*, the participial form has lost its proper force and cannot always be explained grammatically. In all other verb phrases the participle has its proper adjective force.—HARPER AND BURGESS.

The participles are words which are derived from verbs and may take the limitations of the verb, yet which have the nature and use of adjectives.

Neither the participle nor the infinitive is usually considered a distinct part of speech, yet the place to teach the definitions of these is in connection with the parts of speech. Until these are both known the phrase forms of the verb cannot be understood, and it is impossible to name the parts of speech in miscellaneous sentences.

There are two simple or primary participles and several phrase forms. The first primary participle

ends in *ing*, and belongs to all verbs except a few of the auxiliaries. Its adjective character even when used in verb phrases, as "He is running," is plainly seen. It is usually called the present participle, though as its time signification is only relative and depends on the verb with which it is connected, some grammarians prefer to call it the imperfect or simply the active participle. This verbal form in *ing* has also an infinitive use. (See Chapter 40.)

There is another primary participle that is variously known as the past, the perfect, or the passive participle. Its use and meaning vary greatly. It is one of the principal parts of the verb, and enters into a larger number of verb phrases than any other verbal form, being used in making the perfect tenses of the active voice and all the tenses of the passive voice.

The true participial character of the past participle does not always seem evident. *Been*, the most common of all the past participles is never used adjectively. The same is true of the past participles of most of the other neuter or intransitive verbs.

In active verb phrases where past participles occur, such as,

I have lived here many years.

I have written a letter.

the past participles have a certain remote or historic adjective relation which may be dimly recognized, but the meaning is so blended that the verb phrase is usually thought of as inseparable. If we compare

I have written a letter,  
with

I have a letter written,

we see that in the latter sentence *have* is no longer an auxiliary, but has reverted to its original use as a principal verb, and *written* though used adjectively has gained a passive meaning, like that of the participle in a passive verb phrase, such as "The letter is written."

In a similar way, the participle of any transitive verb may be used adjectively outside of a verb phrase. But in this connection it is in no sense past. It has acquired a passive meaning and is usually called the passive participle, as, "The house seen in the distance, looks small."

A few past participles of intransitive verbs have acquired an adjective use in somewhat of a passive sense, as "a grown man," "The risen sun," "A gone goose."

The past participle of an intransitive verb is sometimes used as a predicate adjective after the verb *be*, producing a phrase that resembles the passive voice, though without the true passive signification, as, "Babylon is fallen." The phrase thus formed is also related in meaning to the perfect tense of the active voice. Thus "I am arrived" and "I have arrived" are nearly equivalent in meaning. The former is the more logical form of expression, however. It was the usual form in old English for intransitive verbs, and is still the common idiom of German, though in modern

English it has mostly been discarded in favor of the phrase with *have*.

The past participle has more irregularities of spelling than any other verbal form. When a strong verb loses its ancient inflections, or acquires those of the weak conjugation, the older participial word is often retained for adjective uses, while the new or weaker form is used in true participial relations. Thus, *shaven*, *molten*, and *sunken* are now adjective forms, while *shaved*, *melted* and *sunk* are the forms generally used in participial relations. By some grammarians the past participle is called the perfect participle, though this name is usually reserved for one of the phrase forms.

In addition to the two primary participles there are four participial phrase forms.

A complete view of the participles of the verb may be given as follows:

Seeing, present active participle; seen, past or passive participle.

Phrases.

Having seen—perfect active.

Having been seeing—perfect active progressive.

Being seen—passive imperfect.

Having been seen—passive perfect.

## XL

### INFINITIVES

The true, or simple, infinitive is the name of the verb, as *go*, while *to go* is a phrase or constructive form. I know of no error in English Grammar so fruitful of confusion to the student of English Grammar as the false idea that *to go* is the true (or only) English infinitive. In French and German, *aller* or *gehen* usually means *go*, while *to go* is *à aller* or *zu gehen*.—JOYNES.

The practice of joining to the simple infinitive the preposition *to* was itself a corruption originally. In our early speech *to* belonged strictly to the gerund, or, as it is sometimes called, the dative case of the infinitive. Prefixed to the gerund it meant something. But with the simple infinitive it merely precedes; it does not govern. It is so valueless in itself that when it is omitted, as it regularly is after certain verbs, its absence is not even felt.—LOUNSBURY.

The infinitive is perhaps the most difficult subject in English grammar on account of the great variety of its uses.—HARPER AND BURGESS.

It is long since up-to-date teachers or text-books have called the infinitive a mood of the verb. Its entire lack of assertive power precludes such an interpretation. Grammarians struggled long with this form, and by common consent infinitives and participles are usually classed together as verbals, although in their logical relations they are nouns and adjectives rather than true verbs.

The infinitive is an abstract noun. The chief or root infinitive of a verb names the idea which the verb stands for, and thus becomes the name of the verb itself.

The infinitive originally had no *to*, and is occasionally still so used, as,

“Better dwell in the midst of alarms  
Than reign in this horrible place.”

But the modern infinitive is usually accompanied by *to*, which was originally a preposition, but is now thought of almost as a part of the infinitive itself and has sometimes unfortunately been called its sign. When an infinitive becomes a part of a verb phrase *to* is not used, as in “may go,” “can do,” etc.

The infinitive originally had different cases. It was often used in the dative though sometimes in the accusative, or in the old case called in some languages the locative. The infinitive of purpose was a dative infinitive and corresponded in meaning to the dative supine in *um*, as, “A sower went out to sow his seed.” Such phrases as, “rooms to rent,” “apples to sell,” also represent the usage of the old dative infinitive.

It was this infinitive of purpose only that in old English had *to*. Later, in the seventeenth century, when the sense of *to* was weakened, *for* sometimes preceded this infinitive form, as, “What went ye out for to see?”

The usual infinitive termination was *an*, as *drinc-an*, to drink. In the twelfth and following centuries, *an* became *en* and finally *e* and the *e* itself became a silent

letter. As the terminations of the infinitive fell away the *to* of the infinitive of purpose extended itself to the other forms.

Yet some verbs were so constantly followed by an infinitive that the preposition *to* was not introduced. To this class belong the potential auxiliaries, and a few other verbs, such as bid, dare, need, let, make, and a few others. In many of the phrases thus formed the infinitives seem to have lost their original independence, and the phrase is usually treated as inseparable. Yet the student of English should be able to recognize in each phrase the original character of each component word.

There are also various idiomatic or abbreviated expressions in which *to* is not used, as,

Please go.

You had better go and see.

What, be gone all day?

Why not tell me?

He cannot choose but know.

A colloquial idiom that has come into use during the last century is the use of *to* in place of the entire infinitive, as,

“I should like to.”

The little beggars are doing just what I don't want them to.—STEVENSON.

An adverb is sometimes placed between *to* and the infinitive, though this practice was objected to by the older grammarians. (See Chapter 57.)

Besides the ordinary simple infinitive with *to*, there is also a participial infinitive. It has the form of the active participle, but the use of a noun, and can take the limitations of the verb from which it was derived as, "There is a pleasure in seeing plants grow." It resembles the Latin gerund, and is sometimes called by that name in English. (See Chapter 41.)

In addition to these two simple infinitive forms, there are several infinitive phrases.

All the infinitives of the verb *give* may be shown as follows:

*Give*, or *to give*, root infinitive; *giving*, participial infinitive.

#### PHRASE FORMS.

To be giving—active progressive.

To have given—active perfect.

To have been giving—active, perfect progressive

To be given—passive.

To have been given—passive, perfect.

In its primary use the infinitive is a noun in either the nominative or the objective relation, as,

To do so is to be a coward.

I want to try it.

But the infinitive (as well as other substantive words) has certain uses that shade off into adjective or adverbial constructions, as "a house to let," "good to eat," "wonderful to tell." It is not always easy to interpret an infinitive in its relationships. In an adjective relation an infinitive may limit a noun directly as,

A rule to go by;

Or as an appositive, as,

A desire to be loved.

It may also be the attribute of a sentence, as,

He is to die at sunrise.

Or an objective predicate, as,

I declare this to be true.  
I wanted him to go at once.

In an adverbial relation, it may limit an adjective, as,

Glad to see you. Eager to go.

Or an adverb, as,

Not strong enough to lift it.

The infinitive of purpose is an adverbial infinitive, as,

He went to find it.

In a similar way the infinitive may express a result adverbially, as,

It fell so as to obstruct the view.

Some knowledge of historical and comparative grammar will help a teacher to understand and interpret the infinitive in its various uses.

## XLI

### VERBAL FORMS IN *ING*.

The grammarian in some unexplained way became greatly afraid of the word "gerund," and huddled that form of the verb in with participles, or with nouns, by extending too widely the use of the phrase "verbal noun." In the best of recent grammars this error has been righted and the gerund is given its proper recognition. The matter is complicated by the fact that the ending *ing* belongs also to nouns pure and simple.—ARLO BATES.

The gerund is Janus-faced; a noun on one side and a verb on the other.—RAMSEY.

"The gerund gives the idea of processes going vitally forward with vivid force."

Modern English forms in *ing* represent different original forms which in old English had different endings.

The participle in old English ended in *ende*, or *ande*, which later became *inde* or *ynde* and finally *yng* or *ing*. The abstract or verbal noun originally ended in *ung* and this was afterwards also written *yng* or *ing*. The two verbal forms thus became blended and were finally thought of as one.

The true infinitive of the verb is also closely related to the abstract noun. Thus, "Seeing is believing" and "To see is to believe" are nearly alike in meaning. Modern English uses a verbal in *ing* in many cases

where in older English the infinitive in *an* or *en* would have been used.

Partly on account of these different origins the verbal form in *ing* has many uses in English, as follows:

She was *singing*—a participle used in making a verb phrase.

The bird *singing* on the tree is a thrush—a participle having verbal limitations, but an appositive adjective relation.

The *singing* bird sits on the tree—pure adjective.

*Singing* is a good exercise—abstract or verbal noun.

She amused us by her *singing* of that song—also an abstract or verbal noun, limited like a noun.

She pleased us by *singing* the song so well—verbal noun with verbal modifiers (called participial infinitive and also sometimes called *gerund*.)\*

Some modern grammarians have revived the old term *gerund* for these verbals that show combined character and uses. The term is somewhat loosely applied, but is usually confined to verbals that are participial in

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\*It seems desirable in English grammar to distinguish by some explicit term those verbals which retain much of their original verbal character from those that are exclusively nouns in their sentence construction. The term *gerund*, which is used in Latin grammar to refer to a verbal noun governing cases, and which has been adopted by some recent writers on English, is therefore used in this chapter with this signification. But the use of this word in English grammar is not without some elements of confusion. Lounsbury and other writers on grammar speak of the old dative infinitive as the *gerundial* use of the infinitive, and Bain and other grammarians apply the term *gerund* to the modern infinitive of purpose, as, "I come to write a letter." It would seem to be needful at present in using the term *gerund* in English grammar, that one should first clearly define his own application of it.

form and substantive in use and that at the same time have verbal modifiers (usually a direct object). Intransitive participial nouns, however, are also called gerunds by these writers when the verbal limitation is made prominent, as "His walking to the village was needless."

When a verbal in *ing* is preceded by *the* and followed by *of* it is a pure verbal noun. Verbal nouns in *ing* may be pluralized, but cannot at the same time take objects or other verbal limitations, as, "The windings of the river." "Paul's teachings."

A pure noun in *ing* names the act or state, but the gerund generally shows explicitly that the act is going forward, as, "The putting it into place again was no easy task."

The noun character of the gerund is frequently emphasized by its having (in addition to the verbal modifiers) a preceding adjective modifier, as *the* or a possessive case; as,

My leaving Guido were a kind of death.—BROWNING.

The gerundive use is not confined to the simple verbals in *ing* but is shared by participial phrase forms also, as,

They heard of his having written the letter.  
I distinctly remember having seen him.

There is a still older English construction containing a verbal in *ing* after a noun or pronoun, but having the adjective rather than the noun use, as,

What's the use of me reciting that chapter?  
Ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in us.—BIBLE.

This is occasionally met with in modern literature, as,  
Would you mind me asking you a few questions?—  
**STEVENSON.**

The construction is not uncommon when it is a noun phrase that is limited by the participle, as,

Who ever heard of an army superior in numbers retreating without a blow?

But when a pronoun is used the modern gerundive form is generally preferred, as,

I never thought of his doing it—(not, him doing it.)

The thought in the two cases differs slightly, however. In “Think of me doing it” the thought is of *me*.

In “Think of my doing it” the thought is of the *doing*.

The verbals in *ing* in their participial use sometimes take a passive meaning, as,

The tea is making.  
One thing is wanting.  
So much is owing.  
The house is building.

In the older English this was usually preceded by the prepositional prefix *a*, as, “The house is a-building.”

This prefix is sometimes used also for an intransitive form where the meaning is not passive, as,

Old Time is still a-flying.—HERRICK.

We see then that the verbals in *ing* have a mixed character among the parts of speech. Sometimes the ad-

jective character is prominent, sometimes the noun character. And in each of these relations the verbal character may be very obscure (or almost wholly lacking) or it may be made prominent by the presence of a direct object and other verbal modifiers.

Modern writers on grammar have shown much interest in the history and the uses of these complex participial forms in *ing*.

## XLII

### ADVERBS

Words of more or less obscure descent, belonging to no one of the regularly defined classes of nouns or verbs, subject to no laws or rules, and yet not only incorporated into the idiom but always of undeniable importance,—this exceptional and generally ill-treated class of words we call after the fashion of ancient grammarians, adverbs. The old Latin writers, whenever a word was found to be established in use which differed from its ordinary manner of signifying, thrust it aside into the class of adverbs.—M. SCHELE DE VERE.

The common sink and repository of all heterogeneous and unknown corruptions.—HORNE TOOKE.

When a man says “I didn’t never say nothing to nobody,” this is a sound Old English idiom, traces of which are found after 1600.—KINGTON OLIPHANT.

“Adverbs shade off into prepositions and conjunctions, and the same word is often used as two of these parts of speech or even as all the three.”

“No other interchange of classification is more frequent than that of adverb and preposition, and *vice versa*, and in these cases at least the change is generally due to ellipsis.”

Judging from the names of the two parts of speech one might suppose that the adverb was strictly a verb modifier and that the adjective had a general limiting power for other parts of speech. But on the contrary it is the adjective which is confined to the one relation

of noun modifier, while all other limiting words are indiscriminately classed together as adverbs.

Many of the adverbs were originally of some other part of speech; some are abbreviations or corrupt forms of other words. Many of the prepositions have also an adverbial use. The one essential characteristic of an adverb is that it is a limiting or subordinate word that is joined to some other part of speech than a noun.

An adverb may limit a verb, an adjective or another adverb. Occasionally also it limits a preposition or a connective. It frequently gives intensifying or diminishing force to an entire statement, as, "Truly God is good." In such cases it is called a modal adverb. Even the independent words of negation or affirmation, *yes* and *no*, are sometimes loosely classed with the modal adverbs. They are equivalent to abridged sentences, however, and are sometimes classed with the interjections.

Adverbs are loosely subdivided according to meaning, into those denoting place, time, cause, manner, quantity, etc. In reference to grammatical use we speak of conjunctive, relative and interrogative as well as modal adverbs.

Many adverbs are used in pairs with correlative signification, as, *to* and *fro*, *now* and *then*, *here* and *there*, *hither* and *thither*, *up* and *down*, *right* and *left*. An adverb is often repeated with correlative force, as, *partly*, *partly*; *now*, *now*. English is also rich in adverbial phrases, idiomatic and sometimes hard to

explain, as "at once," "at all," "in vain," "of old," "one by one."

The line of division between adjective and adverb is not very clearly marked. The same word often allows the two uses. Some adverbs, like adjectives, admit of comparison, and the degrees of comparison are formed in the same way as for adjectives.

Many of our Anglo-Saxon adjectives of one syllable had originally an adverbial form ending in *e*. Thus Chaucer uses the word *h o t e* as the adverbial form of the adjective *hot*. This final *e* shared the fate of many other final *e*'s and was gradually dropped. With the dropping of the termination such adverbs became identical in form with the adjectives.

An *ly* added to an adjective is a modern adverbial termination. Adverbs thus formed are not used adjectively; though the corresponding adjective form is frequently used in an adverbial relation, especially by the poets, who find the adjective more poetic than the strictly adverbial form. This usage is not an innovation but has its root in the older English. Such colloquial expressions as "Walk slow" are common among people who are not "bookish," even when the adverb in *ly* is the modern literary form.

One of the time-honored battle grounds of grammarians is the question whether certain predicate terms are modifiers of the subject or the verb. In most of these cases the real truth is that both noun and verb are in a degree modified. In "He walks erect," the predicate term has both an adjective and an adverbial relationship.

It is a peculiarity of the English idiom that the use of *not* in a sentence requires the auxiliary *do*, as "He does not like it." The poetic form allows the *not* with the common verb form, but the *not* is placed after the verb, and usually at the end of the sentence, as, "She likes me not." There are exceptions in literature, however, to this position of the *not*, as,

She not denies it.—SHAKSPEARE.

If the adverb *not* be placed in a sentence containing another negative it neutralizes it, as,

He does not work for nothing.

Formerly two negatives were used to make a stronger negative but this was given up under the influence of Latin, in which two negatives make an affirmative.

In old English *nay* was used to answer a question affirmative in its form, and *no* a negative one, as,

Is he going? Nay.

Is not he going? No.

But this distinction fell away, and *yea* and *nay* are now used in poetic style only.

In a bright paragraph in a literary journal a modern writer discusses "nervous adverbs," that is those that are "nervous" either in position or in literary form. As illustrations of the two cases he quotes, "Few people learn anything that is worth learning, easily," and also the little girl who "liked eggs boiled softly."

*Only* and certain of the modal adverbs show an especial tendency to lose their right position in the

sentence. The usual place for *only* is immediately before the word which it modifies. Yet there are instances in which other considerations may alter this position. In the poem "Identity" no less careful a writer than Thomas Bailey Aldrich has included the line, "I only died last night." To have placed *only* after *died* would of course have spoiled the meter; but it would be interesting to know just how long Mr. Aldrich struggled with that line before deciding to let it go in this shape.

The propriety of placing an adverb between an infinitive and its sign has often been questioned, but the practice seems to be increasing. (See Chapter 57, on "The Split Infinitive.")

Some critics have also objected to the placing of an adverb between the parts of a compound tense, preferring "probably will go," "has searched carefully," etc., to "will probably go" and "has carefully searched." It is frequently better that the adverb should precede or follow the entire phrase, but there are many instances in which the middle of the verb phrase seems to be the required place for the adverb.

It is a good principle in writing that adverbs should be somewhat sparingly used. This is especially true of the intensive adverbs. The effect of *very* is quite as often weakening, as strengthening, to the force of a sentence. *Vastly* seems to have been abused in the eighteenth century somewhat as *awfully* was during the latter part of the nineteenth.

Yet a writer's skill is sometimes emphatically shown

in the choice of an unusual and appropriate adverb. Thus Dickens speaks of two men at a funeral "who spoke as if they themselves were notoriously immortal." The adverb may indeed be the most decorative and distinguishing of words. Ruskin somewhere tells us of the humility of great men who are nevertheless, "endlessly, foolishly, incredibly, merciful."

Sir Arthur Helps in describing a weighty sentence says that it should be so constructed that no other writer will ever be able to "say the like thing so *choicely, tersely, mellifluously, and completely.*" Such an occasional prodigality of adverbs may give a fine touch to a piece of writing. Yet it is only the master's hand that should venture to lay them on so thick.

## XLIII

### PREPOSITIONS

The grammatical function of a preposition is to make the noun-word it governs into an adjunct-word.—SWEET.

Some grammarians have given lists of adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions, for what reason I know not, seeing that they have not attempted to give lists of the words of other parts of speech.—COBBETT. (1818.)

The small parts of speech are so fine as constantly to elude the critical attention of the writer, but so important as constantly to determine the critical effect of the sentence as a whole.—ARLO BATES.

“I was made a victim in a court of law of two prepositions and a conjunction. *Of*, *concerning*, and *that* were the abject instruments of my cruel extinction.”

In the sentence “This is a good country to be born in, to live for, to die for,” the position of the preposition is the most genuine English.—JOYNES.

“Inflectional decay was the chief tendency of the language in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This increased the value of English prepositions.”

In English the prepositions play so important a part that they are really of more weight than the scanty remains of case inflection.—SWEET.

Their importance rises in proportion as a nation begins to think more acutely and to express its thought more accurately.—M. SCHELE DE VERE.

Prepositions were originally and for a long time

classed with conjunctions. (There is a similarity between the two parts of speech, yet a clear differentiation should be made. Conjunctions are primarily sentence connectives. Only a few conjunctions can connect words, and these only in co-ordinate relations. A preposition connects words, yet not in co-ordinate relations. It establishes a relation of dependence between its object and some other word, thus forming a phrase which may be either adjective or adverbial in character, according to the nature of the part of speech which is modified by the phrase. As one writer has said, "The preposition puts a noun into relation with some other word in the sentence."

There is a prevalent idea that the name preposition was given to this class of words because they are placed before nouns. The word seems to have come, however, from the fact that in Greek and Latin the preposition was often compounded with a verb, being placed before it as a prefix. The same thing is sometimes found in English, as in *undergo*.

There is a tradition that school children of a former generation had to commit to memory and recite *verbatim et seriatim* the list of English prepositions. Modern schools certainly do not follow this plan, yet pupils ought to be familiar with the prepositions and able to recognize them quickly.

Many of the prepositions are also used as adverbs, as, "He came *in*." Sometimes a prepositional adverb seems to be a part of the verb itself, as, "to be addicted to," "to laugh at." Some grammarians speak of

“detached prepositions,” as in the sentence “I don’t know what he is thinking of.” Such prepositions have very nearly an adverbial use; yet *of*, though often a “detached preposition,” can never be a true adverb.

An ancient rhetoric contains the rule that “A preposition is not a good word to end a sentence with.” Doubtless in some cases there is a better place for the preposition than at the end of the sentence. Yet the English idiom allows and sometimes prefers this position for the preposition. “What did you ask for?” “Whom did you come with?” are stronger sentences than “For what did you ask?” and “With whom did you come?”

Some of the prepositions were originally participles, as, *respecting*, *excepting*, etc. There is also a large class of prepositional phrase forms, that are usually treated by grammarians as one word, although they will admit of closer analysis. Such are “in regard to,” “according to,” “in spite of,” “by means of,” and “for the sake of.” In “for the sake of peace,” *peace* is grammatically the object of *of*, but logically it is the object of the whole phrase, which is therefore often treated together as one preposition.

While the object of a preposition is usually a noun or pronoun, a phrase or a clause may stand in this relation, as, “till *after the shower*,” “Listen to *what I say*.” An adjective or an adverb may also take the place of a noun as the object of a preposition, as, “till then,” “on high.”

The time honored rule that “Prepositions govern

the objective case" applies of course only to the seven words in English that have an objective case form. But these are so frequently used that the rule is of considerable importance.

The English student should distinguish carefully between related prepositions, such as, *between* and *among*, *at* and *in* before names of places, *in* and *into*, etc. Much care should be taken in choosing appropriate prepositions to convey subtle shades of meaning, or to follow certain words. A choice of prepositions must often be made in such phrases as, "agree *with* or *to*," "adapted *to* or *for*," "a taste *of* or *for*," "correspond *with* or *to*," "reconcile *with* or *to*," and many others. In making such choices one has to rely mainly on his sense of idiom. One who is not thoroughly familiar with English usage often makes mistakes in such points.

The use of *for* before an infinitive, and of *than* as a preposition before a relative pronoun, was common in the earlier English, as, "for to see," "Beelzebub, than whom," etc., but both of these usages have disappeared from modern English.

Owing to the various and subtle shades of meaning which prepositions take, they are less intelligible to foreigners than most words, and are therefore less likely to be adopted into other languages. The existence of similar prepositions is therefore a good evidence of affinity in languages.

The preposition has had an important part to play in the transformation of English from a highly in-

flected language to a "logical" one. It is largely by the exchange of case-endings for prepositions that this has been done. This change has introduced some new possibilities of error in sentence arrangements and has also added new elements of freedom and of strength to the language. But a considerable degree of training and skill is needed to bring fully into play the subtle powers and possibilities of the English prepositions.

## XLIV

### CONJUNCTIONS

"In the order of nature, the conjunction comes last among the parts of speech. It proclaims the maturity of the simple sentence. The need of conjunctions did not come until the language had advanced to form compound sentences."

Only a few conjunctions connect words, and these only on an equality.—CARPENTER.

We have a feeling of *and*, a feeling of *if*, a feeling of *but*, and a feeling of *by*, just as really as a feeling of blue or a feeling of cold.—JAMES.

If we take the word conjunction in its widest sense we may say that *and*, and *that* (in, I know that it is true), represent the extremes of abstract co-ordination and abstract subordination.—SWEET.

The gouty joints of *whereunto*s and *wherebys*, *thereofs*, and *therewiths*.—SHAFESBURY.

A good literary workman is at once to be known by his handling of connectives.—ARLO BATES.

"The conjunction shows the thought connection and so makes thinking clear and accurate."

It is in the right use of these (*i. e.*, the connecting terms or particles), that the brevity and clearness of good style must chiefly consist.—LOCKE.

As regards composition generally the greatest refinements and the most common inaccuracies attend the four simple conjunctions—*and*, *or*, *but*, *if*.—BAIN.

The primary office of a conjunction is to connect

sentences (*i. e.* clauses), but since clauses, especially if co-ordinate, can be abridged by the omission of like words, a very few of the conjunctions have extended their use to connect also words and phrases in the same construction, as, "Will you take cheese or butter?" Almost all such connected expressions may be thought of as elliptical forms of clauses; but the most important conjunction *and* (alone among the connectives) can connect words or phrases in like relations even when there is no ellipsis that can be supplied, as, "John and Mary are a happy couple," "Pompey and Caesar were both great men." We may say therefore, that conjunctions connect clauses, and occasionally also, words or phrases in like constructions.

There are many words which add the conjunctive office to some other function. Such are the relative pronouns, relative adjectives, relative adverbs, and many other adverbs which are not relative.

Conjunctions are of two main classes, co-ordinate and subordinate. A co-ordinate conjunction connects clauses or parts of clauses of equal rank. These connected clauses may be either principal clauses or subordinate clauses holding the same relationship in the sentence.

The most common co-ordinate conjunctions are *and*, *but*, and *or*. The name copulative is applied to *and* and a few others of similar meaning. *But* represents another small group called disjunctive or adversative conjunctions; and *or* represents a small group called alternative conjunctions. These, however, are dis-

tinctions of meaning rather than of grammatical relation. *For* is a co-ordinate conjunction with causal signification as, "He will do it; for this is already agreed upon." *For* is to be distinguished from *because*, which is subordinate and adverbial in character. *For* represents the objective relations of events, while *because* shows the subjective or thought relations between them.

A subordinate conjunction connects a subordinate clause to the principal one; or, more strictly, to that word in the principal clause which the subordinate clause limits. A subordinate conjunction performs for a subordinate clause a like office to that which the preposition does for its object; as may be seen from the fact that the same word may often be used either as preposition or subordinate conjunction without change of its essential character, as, "He studied until noon," "He studied until the teacher came." Yet a conjunction connects without governing, while a preposition governs the case form of an adjunct pronoun.

Subordinate conjunctions are divided according to meaning into those of cause, purpose, comparison, etc., but the classification is neither very definite nor complete. Most of the subordinate conjunctions sustain also more or less of an adverbial relation. The conjunction *that* is called the substantive conjunction, because its chief use is to introduce a noun clause, as, "That you have wronged me doth appear in this," "I hope that you will do it." *That* may also be used to connect an adverbial clause after *so* or *such*.

There are a few phrases that are occasionally used as conjunctions. Common examples are, "as if," "provided that," "in order that," etc. They are really elliptical in character, however.

There are many connective words that are used in pairs, the first pointing out that the connection is to follow. Such are *both—and*, *either—or*, *not only—but also*, etc. These are called *correlative* words (*i. e.*: having a mutual relation) and are usually co-ordinate in character; but *if—yet*, and a few other pairs, belong with the subordinate connectives. One of the two correlative words is frequently an adverb, as, "It was so hard *that* he gave it up."

*And, also* and *or*, among the co-ordinate conjunctions, and *if, though* and a few others among subordinate ones, are never anything except conjunctions. *But, for, since*, and a good many others may be used as prepositions as well. Some of the conjunctions (especially the co-ordinate ones) are sometimes used to introduce sentences, thus forming "prepared" sentences in distinction from the unprepared, as,

"And seeing the multitudes he went up into a mountain."

*Or* sometimes introduces formally a long paragraph, which is thus logically (though not grammatically) connected with what goes before. *Also, too, and therefore* are frequently used in a similar way.

A few adverbs, as *still, nevertheless, however*, are similarly used to connect logically though not formally, and these are sometimes called "half-conjunctions."

Certain cumbrous words sometimes used are made by compounding *where* and *there* with many of the prepositions, as, whereupon, wherein, thereafter, thereunto. Those compounded with *where* are generally used as connectives, those with *there* as adverbs. Although called by Campbell "the luggage of particles," these words have a convenient use in forming complex sentences.

The conjunctions are really few in number. About twenty-three words have been enumerated that perform most of the conjunctive offices in English. But although so few and so loosely related to the rest of the sentence, conjunctions form an important element of speech. Coleridge once wrote, "A clear reasoner and a good writer in a general way may be known by his pertinent use of connectives."

## XLV

### INTERJECTIONS

The miserable refuge of the speechless.—HORNE TOOKE.

Primary undifferentiated language material; word protoplasm, so to speak.—DAVENPORT AND EMERSON.

A stepping-stone to true language, both by suggesting the idea of articulate speech and by supplying a large number if not the entire number of actual roots.—MAX MÜLLER.

“An interjection implies a meaning which it would take a whole grammatical sentence to expound, and it may be regarded as the rudiment of such a sentence.”

In conversation they serve to help the timid, to give time to the unready, to keep up a pleasant semblance of familiarity, and, in a word, to grease the wheels of talk.—DEAN ALFORD.

The idle word is not quite free from blame.—DEAN ALFORD.

Sacred Interpreter of human thought  
How few respect or use thee as they ought.—COWPER.

Cry “Hola” to thy tongue, I prythee,  
It curvets unseasonably.—AS YOU LIKE IT.

The interjection stands among the parts of speech, but it is not really of them. It is, rather, “a whole speech, characterized by a maximum of brevity and a minimum of clearness.” In this respect it is closely allied to the gesture, which usually gives its accompanying force to the ejaculation. Emotion is quick. There is no time to “fit a phrase.” Yet speech will

break out when the feelings are stirred; hence, the need of interjections.

Although the interjection is said to be independent in its sentence relations, other words may depend upon it. In, "O that I had wings," the clause "that I had wings" is the object of a verb of wishing implied in *O*.

The interjection was probably the primary form of articulation. The ones first used may have had an imitative quality, such as we now recognize in *pop*, *bang*, *ding-dong*, and *rub-a-dub*. The best command of the rhetoric of the interjection, perhaps, belongs to children, and also to savages whose peculiar grunts contain whole areas of condensed thought. With civilization the use of interjections diminishes, and their character changes. It has been said that the degree of a man's civilization can be pretty fairly judged by the expletives which he uses. There are many interjections which have a historic meaning, and some are truly philological in character. There are whole classes of literature, however, which have no interjections. One will look in vain for them in treatises on mathematics, physical science or history, though these, as has been well said, "are often provocative of interjections." Fiction and oratory make large use of them; and for the poet the interjection is an important part of his stock in trade.

In conversation these ejaculatory words serve some ends, and we could scarcely do without them. They fill up the gaps. They put the listener into touch

with the talker. Even in writing they sometimes give balance to a halting sentence. *Well* before a reply shows that one does not wholly repudiate the question even if he cannot fully answer it. *Why* rallies the questioner, or puts a doubtful aspect upon the subject discussed. But useful as these and other interjections are, they are much overworked by nervous or unthinking minds.

The early grammarians, wiser perhaps than we, did not rank the interjection as a part of speech. It seems to have slipped into the list at a later era, partly perhaps to preserve the historic number *eight* after the article had been crowded out, and other "parts" had become differently divided.

Some of the ancient grammarians classed the interjection with the adverb, and there is indeed a cognate relation between the two. *Verily*, *truly*, and other modal adverbs have a strong affinity with interjections. *Yes* and *no*, though sometimes called independent adverbs, are more truly interjections. Each of them implies a statement, as, "It is so," or "It is not so," "I will do it," or "I will not do it." Many of the commonest interjections are adverbs put to an independent use, as, *Here*, *There*, *Now*, *Why*, *Well*.

But there are other interjections that are closely related to the verb, such as, *Hold*, *Hush*, *Halt*, *Whoa*, *Gee*, *Haw*, *See here*, *Look out*.

There are many vapid and meaningless expletives, while others are fraught with tremendous meaning. Colorless words often grow into interjections and

become current, but afterwards sink out of sight again. Changes come faster in the interjectional vocabulary than in any other. There is also more local and individual variation in this linguistic department than in others.

There are old historic interjections long disused, which one often meets in reading the English classics and which may be found in our dictionaries. Such are *Marry*, *Gramercy*, *Zounds*, and *Well-a-way*. *La* was a feeble expletive much in vogue among feminine fiction characters of the eighteenth century. There are several religious responses, having a wide-spread and important use, that are classed with the interjections. Such are *All Hail*, the *Selah* of the Hebrew Psalms, *Hallelujah* and its Greek form *Alleluia*. Such also is the great response of prayerful souls through all the ages, *Amen*.

Many of the literary interjections are seldom heard in conversation. Such are *Lo*, *Alas*, *Behold*, *Hail*, *Huzza*, *Heigh-ho*. There are others, however, having a dictionary recognition, that are in common use orally as well, such as *Whew*, *Hurrah*, *Pooh*, and *Indeed*.

One often makes a limited number of interjections cover a wide range of meanings. In *Oh* we may find surprise, joy, pain, disgust, pity, and a whole gamut of emotions, according as the tone of voice may reveal or circumstances decree.

There is a tendency of late to obliterate the spelling distinction between the emotional interjection *oh*,

and the vocative *O* that comes to us from the Latin and is almost like a prefix to the following name, as, "O Lord." But there is some gain to the language in retaining the distinction, which we hope may not be wholly obliterated.

It is a lamentable fact that interjections show an almost universal tendency to verge towards the expressions of profanity. Many of the historic interjections were originally mild oaths. Thus *Zounds* is a contraction of "God's wounds," and "Marry" came into use through the practice of swearing by the Virgin Mary.

The word of prayer, or praise, or imprecation, used in the highest emotional states, is easily drawn upon and degraded to express less intense or lower emotions. People whose high moral sense or refined taste would never sink to the use of "Billingsgate" often use expressions that are everywhere current, but are essentially forms of prayer or cursing that have become more or less disguised by conventional spelling or the cloak of a foreign synonym.

Such modern expressions as "Gracious," "Good Lord," "Good Heavens," "Diable," "Mon Dieu," show how extensively the appellations of God and of his Satanic Majesty have entered into the ejaculatory language. Among this class of words and phrases, there are some, such as "Good-bye," and "Adieu," which are rich and important contributions to the English tongue. Others also have achieved an innocent and respectable position, for even the most refined

and modest mind is scarcely repelled by such a modified form of language as reveals itself in "O dear" "(O Dieu)."

One should not underestimate the sin and vulgarity of profane expressions. Yet there is less real difference perhaps, between the "profane swearing" of the saloon, and the conventionalized expletives of the "Club," than may at first appear.

The use of interjections is a difficult but important subject for the teacher to deal with. To prevent the use of expletives would be impossible. But to curb the tendency, to direct it, to help the children to understand the real nature of the interjections they use, and to cultivate their taste so that only refined and expressive ones shall find utterance from their lips is one of the important parts of the language teaching of American schools.

## XLVI

### SENTENCES AND CLAUSES

A sentence is a completely worded statement, inquiry, or command.—LEWIS'S APPLIED GRAMMAR.

"Every group of words having a verb is grammatically a sentence."

"A sentence is a word or group of words whose form makes us expect it to express a full meaning. We say *expect* because it depends on the context whether or not any sentence expresses a complete meaning."

Exclamatory sentences are closely akin to interrogative and are usually placed in that class.—CARPENTER.

*The Ideal Sentence.*—It should be powerful in its substantives, choice and discreet in its adjectives, nicely correct in its verbs. Withal, there must be a sense of felicity about it, declaring it to be the product of a happy moment, so that you feel that it will not happen again to that man who makes the sentence, nor to any other of the sons of men, to say the like thing so choicely, tersely, mellifluously, and completely.—SIR ARTHUR HELPS.

The sentence is the primary unit of language in form as well as in thought. Words and phrases can only be dealt with grammatically as parts of the sentence. A study of the general plan of the sentence is therefore necessary at the beginning of a course in grammar.

Sentences are classified according to their general form and meaning into declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamatory sentences. Thus:

You will do it.—Declarative.  
Will you do it?—Interrogative.  
Do it.—Imperative.  
How well you do it!—Exclamatory.

The student of grammar needs to examine carefully the structural differences in these classes of sentences.

Some writers on grammar omit the exclamatory sentence as a distinct type. Sentences in this form are rare. They also approach the interrogative in form, beginning with a word that is in its nature interrogative (*how* or *what*) though the word order differs from that of the usual interrogative sentence. Declarative, interrogative and imperative sentences that are short and emphatic are often logically exclamatory and are punctuated as such.

There are various types of the assertive (or declarative) sentence determined chiefly by the character of the verb, as,

The apple is a fruit.—Verb copulative.  
Dogs bark.—Verb intransitive.  
Bees make honey.—Verb transitive.  
Honey is made by the bees.—Verb passive.  
You forget yourself.—Verb reflexive.  
It rains.—Verb impersonal.

There are also negative sentences:

Old form.—I like it not.  
Modern form.—I do not like it.

Every group of words containing a verb and subject is by some grammarians called a sentence. But sen-

tences can be combined into complex and compound sentence-wholes, and it is convenient to have some other word than sentence for the smaller sentences within the larger sentence. The term clause, rather than sentence, is generally used to refer to a subject and predicate that forms one of the parts of a complex or a compound sentence.

Clauses are either principal or subordinate, and subordinate clauses may be adjective, adverbial, or noun clauses according to their relation in the complex sentences to which they belong.

A noun clause is usually connected by the substantive conjunction *that*. It may be:

Subjective.—That it should fail was inevitable.

Objective.—I hope that he will come.

Predicative.—The reply was that he had already written it.

Appositive.—The wish that he may succeed is very general.

A sentence may be only partly compound, as, "He is tall, but not strong." "John and not Mary, was there." Sentences that are logically connected are often put together without a conjunction, as, "The grass is green, the sky is blue." Some writers would put into several sentences what others would punctuate as one. A succession of such short and logically connected sentences is sometimes called a sequence.

A clause (or sentence) is sometimes interjected as a parenthesis into another sentence, as, "I understand (and this view is confirmed by others) that the matter had already been decided by the action of the com-

mittee." The grammatical relationship of such an interjected sentence to the principal one is not always the same as the logical one. In the sentence, "He thinks, I believe, that the world belongs to him," that which is really the principal sentence is logically the object of *believe*.

In the evolution of language the order of sentence development seems to be as follows:

First.—The isolated sentence.—He went away.

Second.—Parallel sentences.—He went away. I am sorry.

Third.—The compound sentence.—He went away and I am sorry.

Fourth.—The complex sentence.—I am sorry that he went away.

The development of a child's language usually follows this order of sentence growth.

Although the sentence as a whole must be studied at the beginning of the grammar course the clauses of a complex sentence cannot be fully discussed until the study of the parts of speech has thrown some light upon the relations of these larger component parts of sentences.

## XLVII

### PHRASES

A large proportion of the elements of sentences are not single words, but combinations or groups of words.—GREEN'S ENGLISH ANALYSIS.

Each of the parts of speech has what we may call a power of extension; that is, it may consist of a group of words, *i. e.*, a phrase or a clause.—CARPENTER.

A phrase is a combination of two or more words, not including a subject and predicate, having in a sentence the office or value of a single part of speech, and capable of being regarded and parsed as such.—WHITNEY.

There is no good reason for giving special prominence to prepositional phrases over others.—BROWN AND DEGARMO.

A sentence can be broken up into as many phrases as there are groups of two or more words connected in meaning, which, taken together, perform the office of a part of speech.—BROWN AND DEGARMO.

Groups of words in sentences are often used to perform the function of a single part of speech. When such a word group contains a subject and predicate it is a clause. When it has no verb within it, it is a phrase. Phrases are named from the part of speech whose office they hold, as noun phrases, adjective phrases, adverbial phrases, etc.

Phrases are also called participial, infinitive, and

prepositional phrases according as the nucleus of the phrase is a participle, an infinitive, or a preposition and its object. A word of any part of speech, however, as a noun, adjective or adverb, to which grammatical modifiers may be joined, can become the basis of a phrase.

Verbs, participles, and infinitives have many phrase forms, which are usually treated as wholes, but admit of further analysis. Prepositional and conjunctive phrases, such as, "provided that," "for the sake of," "in order that," are usually elliptical and capable of analysis, though it is often better to treat them as wholes.

A phrase can be very long and very complex in structure. Participial and infinitive phrase constructions are often of great length. (See Chapter 48, on "Abridged Clauses.")

Phrases, as well as clauses, are sometimes interjected into sentences with which they have a logical rather than a grammatical connection, as, "Your admission, to speak very frankly, goes further than you intended."

A knowledge of the parts of speech is necessary before the student can deal intelligently with the word groups in sentences. Yet the analysis of a given sentence should deal first with these larger wholes and afterwards with the individual words.

## XLVIII

### ABRIDGED CLAUSES

"The absolute or independent use of the participle is one of those constructions which, while entirely well supported by authority yet seems somewhat out of harmony with the idiomatic spirit of the English tongue. Probably all writers of standing sometimes employ this form."

The grammarian does not make rules to teach us to speak and write correctly, but he calls attention to the method employed by writers and speakers whose methods of writing and speaking are approved by the educated section of the community. When we speak of an expression as ungrammatical or "bad grammar," we simply mean that educated people do not approve of its employment.—SWEET.

There are many participial and infinitive expressions which may be thought of as abridged clauses, and which may contain certain subjective, copulative, and attributive elements, as,

For him to be absent is unusual; *i. e.*, That he should be absent, etc.

He being absent, I took his place; *i. e.*, Because he was absent, etc.

These are not strictly clauses, but are often called infinitive and participial clauses.

In an infinitive construction of this kind, the pronouns used will be in the objective case; hence the rule of the old grammars, "The subject of an infinitive is in the

objective case." Yet there is always a verb, or a preposition (usually *for*) that governs this case-form. In the sentence, "I want him to come," *him* is called the subject of *to come*, but its case-form is determined by its relation to the preceding verb. Whenever an objective attribute is an infinitive the expression falls into this class of constructions.

An abridged adverbial clause usually takes the participial form and is called an absolute phrase or the absolute construction. Thus, "He being absent," is an abridgment of the adverbial clause "Because he was absent." When such absolute phrases occur in Latin they require that their parts should agree with each other in the ablative case. In Greek the genitive is the absolute case. In modern English the nominative case is used in these constructions, as, "It being he, I went to meet him." In Old English, however, the dative was used as the absolute case.

About the middle of the fourteenth century the dative began to be replaced by the nominative; or perhaps, as the dative case-endings disappeared, the form began to be felt as the nominative case of the noun, and the pronoun finally fell into the same case by analogy. Yet there are instances in later literature where this old dative (now represented by the objective form of the pronoun) occurs. Milton often uses participial expressions preserving the old dative form, or possibly imitating the Latin construction, as,

"Us dispossessed, the seat of the Deity supreme  
He trusted to have seized."

"Dagon hath presumed, me overthrown,  
To enter lists with God."

Such expressions are historically correct, though modern English is decidedly in favor of the nominative as the absolute case.

Absolute participial phrases, though grammatically allowable, do not seem entirely in harmony with the English language and are less used than formerly, as writers generally prefer a more direct form of expression.

There is a certain class of nearly independent participial phrases which like modal adverbs limit an entire statement, as,

*Generally speaking*, the figurative use of a word is derived from its sense.—JAMES.

*Judging from many hereditary anecdotes* this peculiar temper was hardly less than a monomania.—HAWTHORNE.

The very chin, *modestly speaking*, was as long as my whole face.—ADDISON.

For the abridgment of a substantive clause either a participial or an infinitive form may be used.

Thus:

"I never thought that it was he," may become  
"I never thought of its being he," or,  
"I never thought it to be him."

These substantive abridged clauses usually follow such verbs as wish, think, desire, perceive, etc.

Not every substantive clause can be thus abridged, however. Thus, "I said that I would do it" cannot take either the infinitive or the participial abridged form.

For the abridgment of an objective clause after *think* and a few other verbs the participle is generally used and the subject term is put into the possessive thus limiting the participle, as,

I never thought of his going so soon (*i. e.*, that he would go so soon.)

I did not think of its being he (*i. e.*, that it was he.)

In such sentences modern English generally uses the nominative absolute for the case form of an attributive pronoun, though the vacillation of case form in such sentences as, "It is I," "It is me," leaves an opportunity for variation here, especially in the first person, as, "He did not think of its being me."

(See Chapter 54 on "Case Shiftings of Pronouns.")

Instead of the possessive case before the participle, however, the objective is occasionally used, and the participle then takes the adjective relation, as,

Would you mind me asking you a few questions?—  
STEVENSON.

Instead of the better form,

"Would you mind my asking," etc.

In the abridgment of substantive clauses after most verbs the infinitive form is used. Even with the verb *think*, this is sometimes the case, as,

I wish him to be my messenger (*i. e.*, that he should be my messenger.)

I did not think it to be him (*i. e.*, that it was he.)

In such sentences the attributive pronoun after the

infinitive takes the objective case because of its relation to the subject of the infinitive. A question is sometimes asked as to the case of an attributive noun or pronoun following the copula *to be* when there is no subject of the infinitive, as,

To be a lawyer is his desire.

He wishes to be a lawyer.

Would the genius of the English language use a nominative for the absolute case in such a sentence, or would the association with the infinitive suggest the objective as the case to be used? The question is purely speculative, however, as there are no instances in English literature where a pronoun is used in such a connection. Indeed it seems impossible to imagine an instance in which a well written sentence could contain such a pronoun; or if we could conceive of such a use, it would be wholly problematical what view the writer would take of the necessary relations.

In other words, it is possible to raise grammatical questions whose discussion would have neither practical nor educative value. In the light of common sense, the use of a sentence involving such a hazy grammatical question would be a blemish on rhetorical style, and contrary to the genius of the English language.

## XLIX

### WORD ORDER

Languages tend on the whole more and more to utilize word order for grammatical purposes.—JESPERSEN.

Inflectional forms serve for a device for clearness in languages careless of word order.—DAVENPORT AND EMERSON.

When the relations between words are shown by word order, concord is not of much use, and consequently is reducible to very narrow limits in such a language as English. Conversely, in a highly inflected language with a highly developed system of concord, such as Latin, fixed word order is not required to show the grammatical relations of words.—SWEET.

The mere fact that in English the pupil is obliged to get the meaning of the sentence from the order of the words and from a logical insight into the contents of the thought, with little or no aid from the form of the words—this fact makes the study of English grammar a more abstract and difficult and disciplinary subject than the grammar of any highly inflected speech.—BARBOUR.

The freedom of arrangement required in poetry makes it somewhat superior to prose as a means of expelling from a pupil's mind the delusion that word order is a safe guide to grammatical construction.—HARPER AND BURGESS.

The substitution of word order for flexions means a victory of spiritual over material agencies.—JESPERSEN.

We have in mind an established order, the "regular pattern of thought," and also a psychological order, a conscious arrangement to give effect.—KELLNER.

The rigidity of English word order is often much exaggerated; it is hardly rigid at all.—HARPER AND BURGESS.

The change of English from an inflected to a non-inflected language has had many subtle effects upon the language as a means of expression. It has relieved us of the burden of learning many forms and has given us large freedom in the logical relationship of words. It has made it possible for a word to hold several relationships at once, and thus has added new elements of force to expression. But it has also made certain requirements more stringent. Word order has acquired grammatical significance, and so has become more specific and obligatory.

Old English with its large elements of concord had very wide freedom in the order of its words. There was little possibility of a word's getting detached in thought from its proper relations, since the form showed so emphatically its logical connections. In the changes that occurred in the twelfth and thirteenth century, inflections dropped away, and word order became more fixed. Either the establishment of word order made agreements needless so that they fell away, or else the inflections having decayed the word order of necessity became more rigid, or more probably still, each process was in some degree the effect of the other.

The parts of speech and their functions are largely dependent upon the position that the words occupy.

Almost any change in word order is likely to give some change in syntactical relations. Thus when several adjectives limit the same noun the one is placed nearest which expresses the most essential and permanent quality. This adjective limits the noun alone, while each preceding adjective limits the noun as modified. Thus in the phrase, "a poor old colored woman" age is more inherent than poverty but less so than race relations. So "colored" is made to limit "woman" alone, while "old" and "poor" limit the whole phrase following. The question of the order to be observed when a cardinal and an ordinal numeral are connected in the same phrase (three first, or first three) is of this nature. The order depends on the question as to which of the two numerals expresses the most inherent and primary idea. (See Chapter 29.)

Adverbs are perhaps the words that show most liability to lose their right connections, though pronouns and participles also have a way of escaping from their normal positions in the sentence.

Most that we know of word order in English comes to us unconsciously and it is difficult to put matters so subtle into the form of rules. Indeed, many grammars are entirely silent on the important subject of word order. The general principle, "Keep the parts that are related near together," is the chief one that can be consciously applied in making English sentences.

Yet early in the grammar course the attention of the student should be definitely given to the natural order of parts in assertive and interrogative sentences. Ex-

amples of common inverted types should also be examined and the advantages gained by the inversion should be estimated. These advantages are sometimes grammatical, making the relation of the parts more evident, and sometimes purely rhetorical, as in "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." The rhetoric of a sentence (even more than its grammatical relations) is very dependent upon questions of word order. Even when clearness and grammatical correctness are both present, a change of word order will often give force and elegance to a halting sentence.

Poetry uses inversion far more than prose. Even the verb in poetry is sometimes allowed to begin an assertive sentence, as,

Rose a nurse of ninety years,  
Took his child upon her knee.—TENNYSON.

Putting an adverb at the beginning of a sentence is a common way of causing an inversion in word order, as,

"Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight."

The poetical device of placing an adjective after its noun, as, "pastures green," "tresses brown," merely for metrical effect, is frowned upon by some critics. Yet all will agree that a greater freedom of word order in poetry than is admissible in prose, is not only a proper "poetical license" but a true means of giving poetic beauty. To make a prose paraphrase of a piece of poetry may not be of great value as an exercise in composition, but as a study of word order (by comparison

of the word order of prose and poetry) it has some genuine value.

Inversion is rare in a dependent clause of English. It sometimes occurs, however, as in the expression, "as much as in me lies." In Old English, though its word order was on the whole much more free than ours, there were a few restrictions that the modern language has freed itself from. The verb of a dependent sentence was usually deferred to the end, as in German, thus demanding a more strained attention. The word order that was introduced by French influence after the Conquest was of a lighter and brighter kind.

The study of the word order of specific sentences, the comparison of word order in different classes of sentences, and the noting of changes in meaning made by changes in arrangement, form an important part of grammatical study. Also a comparison of the word order of the English sentence with the unlike idioms of German or with the freer word order of Latin, is a good way to throw added light upon the characteristics of the English tongue.

# L

## GOOD USAGE

The rules of grammar have no value except as statements of fact. Whatever is in general use in a language is for that reason grammatically correct.—SWEET.

However language may be abused, the usage which gives law to speech is still that usage which is founded on the common sense of mankind.—GOOLD BROWN.

The genius of a language unconsciously presiding over all its transfigurations and conducting them to a definite issue, will have been a far truer, far safer, guide than the artificial wit, however subtle, of any single man or any association of men.—TRENCH.

The English which we ought to speak and write derives its authority, not from the dicta of grammarians and lexicographers, but from the slowly evolved will of the nation.—WELSH.

We are not of those who are the obedient slaves of relentless grammatical rules, but those whose usage, barring slips, makes or mends them.—N. Y. *Independent*.

Everyone knows that the ultimate standard for correctness in language is good usage, but where is the authority that shall tell us beyond a doubt what good usage is?

The French have their “Academie,” founded in 1635, and consisting of “Forty Immortals,” elected for life. This body meets twice a week at the Palace

Mazarin in Paris, and constitutes "the highest authority on everything appertaining to the niceties of the French language, to grammar, rhetoric, and poetry, and the publication of the French classics."

The literary journals of England and America have sometimes called upon their readers to vote for the "Forty Immortals" of these respective nations. It is a harmless and interesting pastime. But the distinguished writers thus voted for do not "stay elected." Literary reputations rise and fall. And where is the literary journal whose clientage has authentic power and prestige to pronounce upon the proper membership of such a tribunal?

We are often told—and in general it must be agreed—that only "present, reputable, and national usage" can be considered good. But even in these forceful adjectives there is some debatable territory.

When a poet uses for poetic reasons an archaic word, it is often better poetic usage than the modern term would be. It may be said, however, that the occasional use of archaic terms is really "present" usage in the field of poetry.

When a Shakespeare, or a Tennyson, or a Kipling introduces a word or phrase not hitherto received into good linguistic society, but which seems appropriate to the occasion, the new term is very likely to become at once "reputable." Even a lesser genius has sometimes the happy inspiration to match an occasion with a word or phrase that proves its right to live.

Yet the practice of one writer, or of several writers, or of one or more periodicals, however high they may stand in the world's estimation, cannot alone make an expression "reputable." Nor is the wide-spread use of a term a sure guarantee of its respectability. "You often hear it" is no proof that it is in good repute. There must be something in the word or phrase itself which is fitted to call out the uniform, or nearly uniform, support of those whom the world deems worthy to decide such questions, or else its linguistic standing rests on an insecure basis.

But it is the question of national usage that gives the largest room for variations of opinion. There is many a word or phrase of limited territorial extension that is in good repute in the region where it is "at home." Perhaps it is a language growth, and will finally conquer the whole field. It is not always needful to frown upon a word because some parts of the national domain have not yet heard of it.

Or, if universality of acceptance be requisite, why stop with the national idea? The niceties of the English tongue would seem to be a more promising field for an Anglo-American alliance than is to be found along political lines. Language has a larger empire than any single nation. This is more fully recognized than it used to be. English hypercriticisms of "American English" and American super-sensitivity as to English opinions regarding the same, are being outgrown together. America and England are both in the jury box in deciding the standards

of the mother tongue which is our common heritage.

But if America—then the same is true of each part of our large domain—the South and the North, the West as well as the East. And if England and America—then also Australia, and the new English-speaking peoples that are growing up in Africa and Asia and the islands of the Pacific.

In other words, language movements defy territorial limits, and if a language has within itself the qualifications that tend to make it a world language, there cannot be any sectional or national authority that has power to judge all its usages.

But while we have no authoritative tribunal that can settle all our linguistic questions, we believe that we are better off than the French because of this fact. It is not an authority for good usage that an educated person needs, but a knowledge of the principles that guide usage, and the habit of mind that will enable him to be both a leader and a follower in his relation to the usages of his generation.

Under such conditions there will be both sectional and individual differences in usage, which help to make life interesting, and are not to be wholly deprecated. Yet, after all, it is only in colloquial English that large differences occur, and it is not with these that English grammar is chiefly concerned. The principles of English grammar are derived by the inductive study of the usages found in the standard literary works that are written in the English tongue. These standard works are read wherever the language

is spoken, and give a degree of unity to the language of all localities. The usages of literary English change with the generations, but the changes are slowly evolved, and are the result of the combined thought of the whole mass of educated people. The literary use of a language has a somewhat stable, as well as nearly universal, basis, and is, in general, "present, reputable, and *international*" in character.

## LI

### IDIOMS

Idiom is the dress and fashion of experience.—PEGGE'S ANECDOTES OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

"Isolated forms that are survivals sometimes go against our grammatical sense."

The idiom of language admits only of being observed.  
Let no man ask why.—BUTTMAN.

"Idiom is not seen in full force so long as we can reconcile it to grammatical structure. There is something arbitrary and masterful about true idiom."

There is much forcible English that cannot be parsed.—ALLEN.

Many of the puzzles of word-parsing arise from asking of English what it does not give, or rather *has given up*.—JOYNES.

The attempt to adjust the words of an idiom to grammatical rules would be an attempt to rob our tongue of some of its choicest elements of life and strength.—TOWNSEND.

If any rules stand in the way, so much the worse for the rule.—BRANDER MATTHEWS.

The peculiar mould in which a language shapes itself is the *idiom* of the language. Every language has many peculiarities that belong to itself alone. The idioms show the modes of thought that belong to the people that speak the language.

Idiom in its largest sense, includes all special meanings given to groups of words, as, "How do you do?" and "Look out;" also variation from the general rules of agreement, as, "It is *they*." All special cases of diction and of the government, arrangement or agreement of words, in which one language differs from others, belong to its idiomatic structure. Thus the placing of the past participle of a verb phrase at the end of the sentence is an important idiom of the German tongue.

"The sun rises at six" is idiomatic English, while the French idiom is a phrase that translated literally would be "at six hours of the morning." The use of the present tense with a future meaning, as, "He is going home to-morrow" is also an English idiom.

The sentence, "How long have you been here?" though it seems simple and natural to the native Englishman, is nevertheless an idiom. "How long are you here?" is the form which the sentence takes in general grammar. Natives of other countries tell us that it seems to them absurd to say "have been" while one is still here. Idiomatic expressions cannot be classified by analogy but must be studied one by one.

Every teacher of a foreign language knows well the mongrel kind of expression called "translation English," which retains some of the peculiarities of one language while using the words of another. It requires a far-reaching knowledge of both languages to transfer perfectly the thought of a well-written production of one to an equally well-written production of the other.

Indeed it is a question whether it ever can be perfectly transferred, as the thought itself is shaped partly by the mode of its expression. Even the most successful translation seldom has as vigorous a style as the original.

The foreigner who has learned to speak "correct English" seldom gets above a certain "bookishness" in his speech which he himself is probably unaware of; and owing to our long-continued national isolation it is doubtless still more rare for an American to acquire perfectly the idiomatic command of a foreign tongue.

An illustration of the difficulty which one finds in an attempt to express himself in a foreign idiom, may be given by certain quotations taken from examination papers of the Porto Rican teachers who during the summer of 1904 studied at Harvard and Cornell Universities:

"We not talk English often, not can."

"We like stay very much."

"Columbus fell over his knees to tell his downfall to Isabella."

"Isabel is six years old and is therefore on time to attend school."

"If Jefferson don't would make other important thing in his public life, this notable work have would being enough to make him live in the hearts of the American people."

But in his efforts to translate, a foreigner sometimes gets a more conscious knowledge of the idiom of the new language than the native possesses who has unconsciously been using the correct idiom all his life. The scholar needs not only to be able to speak and

write his native language correctly, but to know why he uses the idioms which he does; to be able also to test them, to interpret them to others. He also needs to gain from his knowledge of language a knowledge of his own forms of thinking and so to be led into more logical and cogent lines of thought itself.

There are many idioms of local extension within a given language. Those which are true idioms (and not merely expressions loose in syntax) are of real value and give flavor to life and to literature. American idioms are different from those heard in England, while in different parts of America there are great differences in the colloquial idioms in current use.

Idiom is more fundamental than dialect and far less local and temporary. Colloquial language is more idiomatic than the language of literature. Thus in spoken language, contractions of the negative verb phrases, as, "I can't," "You don't," etc., are constantly used, and are preferred to the unabridged form, but this idiom is excluded for the most part from the language of books.

Slang expressions, if they are of such a nature as to be permanently valuable, may finally become idiomatic, but it takes time for them to become approved and to grow into idiom. A good idiom is *old*, while good similes and metaphors in language should be *new*. Most of the slang that is invented is not permanently valuable and never grows into idiom. There are also various peculiar expressions which we hear and see, that are not at all idiomatic, but are the result of loose and illogical thinking. Even the native needs a critical

taste and acumen to be able to distinguish always between the idiom of a language which is its strength, and the confusions of loose thought or doubtful syntax which are the weakness of linguistic expression.

Unusual expressions, if they are true idioms, are forcible and give vivacity and flavor to life and to literature. But while all true local and colloquial idioms are of interest, it is the idioms of literary English that grammar is chiefly concerned with.

In dealing with the general traits of English we have been dealing with its idiomatic character. But there are also many special words and phrases having an idiomatic character that engage the attention of the philologist.

Among idiomatic English phrases may be named, "many a man," "a great many," "this many years," "the more the merrier," "what with this, what with that," "by and bye," "ever and anon," "so to speak," "of course," "to be sure," "the house is building." The older English had many idiomatic phrases not now in use, as, "the tane and the tother," "go to now," "good your ladyship," "dost hear?," "have at you." "Knock me at the gate," and "He went strange countries for to see," also contain idioms.

Among idioms of syntax may be named, the omission of the conjunction *that* in substantive clauses, as, "I knew it was he;" the use of the double or cumulative genitive, as, "This child of ours;" the retained object in the passive voice with the indirect object made the subject, as, "I was shown some pictures;" and the use

of the sign *to* to take the place of the whole infinitive, as, "I asked him not to."

One markedly peculiar class of idiomatic English phrases is represented by "had rather," "had as lief," with others similarly formed. (See Chapter 53.)

In dealing with the more peculiar idioms of English, many grammarians make it their effort to explain away all deviations from general grammar and so make it appear that the peculiar phrase is "not much of an idiom" after all. "How shall I dispose of this?" is the common grammatical formula. But to explain away, is not to explain. And why should we "dispose of" our idioms? We ought indeed to try to interpret them. The student of language should face firmly, and deal frankly with, these expressions that puzzle the grammarians. Every irregularity arises by deviation from some regularity, and historic grammar will frequently do much to elucidate idiomatic mysteries.

But since one of the most common causes of irregularity is confusion of thought, the peculiar phrase should be called on to "show its credentials." We should draw as clear a line as possible between true idiom, and loose syntax, or slang which has overstepped right bounds.

The proper grammatical way to treat an idiom then, is to *test* it—to accept it if it is good, and reject it if of doubtful value; also to explain its history if historical grammar reveals such an explanation.

Then, if it really belongs to the genius of the language the way to dispose of it is to call it by its true name *idiom*, and *let it go*.

## LII

### IMPERSONAL VERBS AND SENTENCES

An abundance of impersonal verbs is a mark of an early stage in language, denoting that a speaker has not yet arrived so far in development as to trace his own actions and feelings to his own agency.—ABBOTT.

The business of the grammarians and the verbal critics is not to make language or prescribe rules, but more modestly to record usage, and to discover the principles which may underlie the incessant development of our common speech.  
—BRANDER MATTHEWS.

In every language there are certain idiomatic forms that express in a general way facts that are not explicitly referred to any specific agency. Such sentences are called impersonal sentences, and the verbs that belong to such sentences are impersonal verbs. Thus, *rains*, *hails* and *snows* are impersonal or unipersonal verbs.

The earlier English abounded in impersonal sentences which had a somewhat different form from those used at present. The impersonal verb was usually accompanied by a dative construction, as,

Me remembereth of the day of doom.—CHAUCER.

“Whether lyketh you better,” sayd Merlyn, “the sword or the scabbard?” “Me lyketh better the sword,” sayd another.—MALORY.

Many of the old impersonals were subjunctive in

their verb forms, as, "Me were liever," "him hadde rather." Out of these certain peculiar modern idioms have developed. (See Chapter 53.)

As the dative usually preceded the verb it came to be thought of in time as a kind of psychological subject. A small remnant of these old datives is found in the words "methinks" and "methought" which though archaic are still in recognized poetical use. A colloquial expression sometimes vulgarly used, "Thinks I to myself," however, has no grammatical nor any other authority.

Later the pronoun *it* came into use as a kind of expletive subject for these impersonal verbs, and the dative object then followed the verb. Thus, "Me remembereth" became "It remembereth me."

Examples:

It yearns me not.—SHAKESPEARE.

It would pity any living eye.—SHAKESPEARE.

I'll dispose them as it likes me best.—MARLOWE.

It recks me not.—MILTON.

The dative construction in these sentences is clearly allied to the dative object sometimes found in sentences not impersonal in form, as, "Knock me at the gate." And from such sentences one may pass by easy gradations to the indirect objects in ordinary modern use, as,

Dance me no dance.

Saddle me the horse.

Bring me the book.

Modern English has replaced most of the old impersonals with other idioms or with personal forms. Thus, "Loth him was" has become "He was loth." The old subjunctives with *had* are now "I had rather," "He had as lief," "You had better," etc. Instead of "If it pleases you," we now say "If you please," or simply, "Please, do so and so."

But although the old impersonal usage is mostly obsolete, writers occasionally revive it for poetic effect. Thus Walter Scott wrote:

When in Salamanca's cave  
Him listed his magic wand to wave,  
The bells would ring in Notre Dame.

LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

Modern English retains in common use a few impersonal forms though without all the marks of the ancient impersonals.

Among these are "What ails you?" "It pains me," and most common of all, those describing the weather, as, "It is cold," "It freezes." Modern impersonals usually have *it* for the expletive subject, and this is therefore called the impersonal pronoun. *It* has a similar expletive use when the real subject is an infinitive or a clause following the verb, as,

It is pleasant to walk on the beach.  
It is too bad that he should do so.

*There* has a similar expletive use, as,

There is a pleasure in the pathless wood.  
He would go if there were need.

All of these sentences are therefore allied to the impersonal sentences of the older English.

Another important class of modern sentences having a kind of impersonal character includes those in which *It* stands as the subject, while the sentence attribute may have any person, number or gender, as, "It is I," "It is they," "It is the boys." The early form of these sentences had a different verb agreement, as, "It am I," or "I am it," which is similar to the German of to-day. "Ich bin es." Thus Wycliffe and Tyndale wrote in their Scripture translations, "I it am."

Although the nominative is the recognized case for the attribute in such sentences, Dean Alford and some other writers have contended for the propriety of the objective form, especially in colloquial usage and in the first person, as, "It is me." These sentences have an analogy to such expressions as, "C'est moi" in French and other languages.

A few indefinite expressions in modern colloquial English have a kind of impersonal meaning. Thus the French "On dit" (one says) has its counterpart in the English "They say." In modern usage, however, Mrs. Grundy is sometimes made the scapegoat for irresponsible gossip. A similar lack of personality sometimes occurs in the use of *you*, as "He was so thin that you could almost look through him." This impersonal and familiar use of *you* is common in conversation, and a few writers have made use of it in literary writings, though it could easily become a mannerism.

**Example:**

The house was a low, tumble-down affair. You could see in a moment that it was the house of a family in humble life.—STEVENSON.

The editorial “we” has also a little of this general or impersonal character.

The subject of impersonal sentences and their modified modern forms is a most interesting one to the student of historical and comparative grammar.

## LIII

### HAD RATHER, HAD BETTER, HAD AS LIEF

Idioms have their kindred as well as men.—JESPERSEN.

Idioms not understood, like men in the same situation, are sure to be misunderstood.—LOUNSBURY.

One of the most peculiar of all English idioms is the use of *had* with rather, better, as lief, etc., as, “I had rather do it than not.” Such phrases seem to contradict the logic of language, and have given great trouble to writers on grammar.

It is perhaps enough for practical purposes to know that all these phrases have the sanction of good and abundant literary usage from an early period, and that their history can be traced through natural processes of language from original language forms. Yet some knowledge of this history, as well as of certain peculiar considerations that are influencing present usage in regard to each specific phrase, is also desirable for the advanced student of English grammar.

In an article entitled *The Story of an Idiom*, in *Harper's Magazine* for June, 1904, Professor Lounsbury of Yale University has traced in a very comprehensive way the history of these phrases, acknowledging however, as an aid in this work, the investigations of Dr. Fitzedward Hall nearly a quarter of a century ago. It is from this article by Professor Lounsbury that

much of the material has been gathered for the following brief discussion of the history and nature of this class of idiomatic phrases.

The first traces of this idiom are found in subjunctive impersonal sentences containing the comparative of *lief* or *liev* (meaning *dear*) and a dative personal pronoun, as, "Me were liefer," *i. e.*: "It would be dearer to me." Similar sentences were formed with the subjunctive of *have* which meant *to hold*, as, "Him hadde it liefer," *i. e.*: "It would be held dearer to him." Later the dative of the pronoun was changed for the nominative.

These impersonals with *liefer* or *liever* are often met with in the writings of Chaucer, as,

Liefer I had to dien on a knife  
Than thee offendè, truè dearè wife.

For about two hundred years "had liefer" was in full sway, but in the fifteenth century a rival phrase "had rather" sprang up, conveying the same idea with a different word. This grew rapidly and finally drove "had liefer" almost entirely out of use. In Shakespeare's plays "had rather" occurs many times, but "had liefer" not at all. "Had liefer" was not wholly extinguished, however, and Tennyson revives the old phrase in his poem *Enid*.

Far liever had I gird his harness on him

A descendant of the phrase is in full colloquial use to-day in the positive form "had as lief."

In the phrase "had rather" which thus supplanted

“had liefer,” *rather* seems to have been thought of as an adjective as *liefer* had been. It being the comparative of *rathe*, meaning early, or quick, the phrase “had rather” carried the meaning of “hold it quicker” or “more desirable.” Thus the Bible verse “I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God,” may be paraphrased as, “I hold it preferable to be a doorkeeper,” etc.

For a long time the phrase was accepted naturally without close analysis. But in the eighteenth century, when English began to be studied critically, it was inevitable that so peculiar a phrase as “had rather” should attract attention, and become the object of criticism from those who did not understand it. The corresponding phrase “had better” was also in occasional use, and had been from an early period, having been first used in the original form “me were better”—a form which was never in use with *rather*. But “had better” had never come into extensive use, and was now rarely heard. “Had liefer” also had gone out of use, so the force of the grammarian’s attack fell only on “had rather.” In all other connections *rather* had come to have an adverbial instead of an adjective use, so that the incongruity of the phrase was sensibly felt. Dr. Johnson in his dictionary of 1755 defines “to have rather” as “to desire in preference,” but adds, “This is, I think, a barbarous expression of late intrusion into our language, for which it is better to say *will rather*.” In Sheridan’s grammar, a few years afterwards this thought is repeated.

Lowth's grammar of 1762 adds to this misinterpretation of the idiom by advancing the theory that the proper form was "I would rather," that this had been contracted into "I'd rather" and then erroneously expanded into "I had rather." This ingenious etymology, for which there is no justification in fact, became for a long time the accepted solution. It was adopted into the early editions of Webster's Dictionary, and may be found in some of the nineteenth century grammars. Recent dictionaries and grammars, however, have corrected this misinterpretation, giving the true origin and history of the phrase, and have endorsed it as a true English idiom that has had an accepted literary use from an early period.

But while "had rather" has been reinstated among the approved literary idioms of English, it is undeniable that the use of "had rather"—both the literary and especially the colloquial use—has declined in modern times in favor of the newer phrase "would rather." Although "would rather" lacks the ancient prestige that belongs to "had rather," it *does* say, even if a little imperfectly, what it is intended to say. While in "had rather" both words are used in a somewhat archaic sense and relationship, in "would rather" the verb is used in its modern sense, and *rather* sustains its usual adverbial relation. But in spite of the growth of "would rather" it is not likely that "had rather" will share the fate of "had liefer" and be abandoned as a true idiom of the English tongue.

Although "had liefer," "had rather" and "had

“better” were originally formed after the same pattern of speech, the history and present status of “had rather” and “had better” are by no means alike. “Had better” developed very slowly into general use, but in recent years it has become very common and it is more frequent than “had rather” in modern English literature. The phrase also has positive and superlative forms, “had as good,” and “had best.” But while “had rather” has in a sense accommodated itself to the modern sense of idiom by suggesting for *rather* a quasi-adverbial character, this cannot so easily be done for *good, better* and *best*.

The analogy of “would rather” has also inaugurated the doubtful phrase “would better” which is now occasionally met with in speech and in newspaper English. In the words of Professor Lounsbury, “This is as ungrammatical as it is unidiomatic. What the one who employs it really says . . . is that he would do so and so better than something else. What he is trying to say is that it would be better for him to do so and so instead of something else.”

In the phrases “had rather” and “had better,” the tendency of both *rather* and *better* to suggest an adverbial instead of an adjective use, has also led to the employment of other adverbs in the same connection, and “had sooner,” “had as soon,” “had as well,” are sometimes heard. The propriety of these may be questioned, but as to the original consistency of “had rather” and “had better” with the true idioms of English, there is no question.

## CASE SHIFTINGS OF PRONOUNS\*

"It is me," a stereotyped, idiomatic, colloquial form used by the masses, and shunned by the fastidious. "It is I," more literary and formal, used by those with strong feeling for grammatical consistency.—CARPENTER.

It is only the influence of ignorant grammarians that prevents such phrases as "It is me" from being adopted into the written language and acknowledged in the grammars.—SWEET.

"It is me" is an expression which every one uses. Grammarians (of the smaller order) protest; schoolmasters (of the lower kind) prohibit and chastise; but English men, women, and children go on saying it, and will go on saying it as long as the English language is spoken.—DEAN ALFORD.

"It seems as if the last refuge of 'whom' is the construction 'than whom' where it had originally nothing to do."

Every error in grammar might be established if frequent usage or the occasional slips of good authors are to be accepted as final authority.—MARSHALL T. BIGELOW.

When the English language gets in my way it doesn't stand a chance.—HENRY WARD BEECHER.

The case distinctions of the pronouns are often obscure or variable. Grammatical laws have always seemed to have a weak hold on the case forms of the

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\*JESPERSEN's *Progress in Language* (London, 1894) has an important chapter on Case-Shiftings.

pronouns, so that a mere point of euphony has sometimes been held to justify variation. These case shiftings are of great interest to philologists and there is much divergence of opinion as to what should be the allowed liberty in this field.

We have already noticed (See Chapter 52 on "Impersonal Sentences") the somewhat widespread use of the expression, "It is me." It is allied to the old impersonal sentences containing datives, and also has an analogy to certain expressions in other languages, as the French "C'est moi," where the nominative form *je* is never used. In America the nominative form, "It is I," has been generally approved as the literary form, but the objective is frequent in colloquial usage and is approved by some grammarians as correct. This form of construction is less frequent in the third person than in the first and second, though sometimes heard.

Dean Alford, however, who contends strongly for the correctness of "It is me," thinks the same construction should be extended to the other pronouns as well. But regarding the Scripture expression "It is I, be not afraid," he says: "This shows us why the nominative should be sometimes used. The majesty of the speaker and his purpose of reassuring his disciples . . . point out to us the case in which it would be proper for the nominative and not the accusative to be used." As a grammatical argument, however, this may not seem wholly convincing.

In commenting on the difference in this usage among

the three persons Dr. Latham, in his History of the English Language, points out that "*me* is not the proper, but only the adopted accusative of *I*, being in fact a distinct and independent form of the personal pronoun." He argues therefore that "*me* and *ye* may be called indifferent forms, nominative as much as accusative and accusative as much as nominative. *Him* and *her* on the other hand are not indifferent. The *m* and *r* are respectively the signs of other cases than the nominative."

Perhaps, however, phonetic influence is in a measure the reason why pronouns of the first and second persons are more free than those of the third person to use their accusative forms in these predicate constructions. The forms *me*, and *thee*, are thus brought into harmonious relation with *we*, *ye*, *he*, and *she*, thus making more orderly set of phrases for this predicate relation.

In the line,

"Be thou me, impetuous one."

found in Shelley's Ode to the West Wind, the use of *me* gives a desirable poetic euphony, which the nominative case could not give.

In "Fare thee well," *thee* is sometimes thought of as a subject, although the older and fuller form was "may it fare thee well." It bears a resemblance, moreover, to "Haste thee," "Stay thee," "Awake thee," "Hear thee," used by Shakespeare and other writers. In such sentences *thee* was not perhaps

originally thought of as the subject of the imperative, but as a reflexive object or dative.

There are many cases in literature, however, where *thee* is used for *thou*, as,

Scotland and thee did in each other live.—DRYDEN.

"Tis better thee without than he within.—MACBETH.

The Quaker dialect has emphasized this tendency to make *thee* a colorless form by such expressions as, "Did thee say thee wanted to go?"

When a pronoun is not in close proximity to its governing word the case sense seems difficult to carry, and writers have often ignored the true relation, as,

Let fortune go to hell for it, not I.—SHAKESPEARE.

Let you and I cry quits.—THOS. HUGHES.

But such lapses as these on the part of writers are not to be justified.

In exclamations the objective is often used, as, "Dear me!" "Oh me miserable!" Yet in address the nominative is the usual form as, "Oh unhappy thou!" "Thou blessed One!" For an unattached pronoun (as in the reply to questions) colloquial idiom often uses the objective, as, "Who goes there?" "Me." This may be thought of, however, as an abbreviation of the colloquial "It is me."

*But* and *save* have sometimes been followed by the nominative as though they were conjunctions rather than prepositions, as,

None save thou and thine I've sworn  
Shall be left upon the morn.—BYRON.

Away went Gilpin, who but he?—COWPER.

An elliptical expression following *as* usually takes the nominative as the obviously grammatical form of the pronoun, as, “Who is so happy as I?” Yet there are instances in literature where the objective is used with good effect, as,

The nations not so blest as thee.—THOMSON'S RULE BRITANNIA.

Yet oft in Holy Writ we see  
Even such weak minister as me  
May the oppressor bruise.—SIR WALTER SCOTT.

The usage in the last instance does not seem to be a happy one, and was perhaps adopted by the poet chiefly for rhyming purposes. Yet the idea of a half-preposition seems sometimes to reside in *as*, giving a degree of justification for the objective form.

Case shifting is especially common after *than*. The natural and approved case for an abridged comparative clause would seem to be the nominative, as,

I have known much more highly instructed persons than he make inferences quite as crude.—GEORGE ELIOT.

He seems mightier far than thou.—BYRON.

A greater soldier than he.—CHAUCER.

But literary usage is by no means uniform. Bishop Lowth in his grammar quotes many instances of the use of the accusative after *than*, as,

She fancies herself better than you and me.—THACKERY.

She should be two inches shorter than me.—TROLLOPE.

A fool's wrath is heavier than them all.—BIBLE.

On the other hand, in

My soul hates nothing more than he.—AS YOU LIKE IT.

the elliptical construction seems to require that the objective rather than the nominative should have been used.

The explanations given to these varied case forms after *than* seem nearly as uncertain as the usage itself. Whether the feeling that prompts the variation rests in a shifting character of the case form itself or in a wavering sense of the character of *than* (as preposition or conjunction) may be doubted. Yet in the minds of most persons of strong grammatical sense *than* is usually a conjunction and the following pronoun would take the nominative case unless the objective is substituted for reasons of euphony. The most anomalous of all these case variations is found perhaps in the phrase "than whom" found in classic writings, though there is no very good syntactical explanation of the phrase, as,

Beelzebub, than whom, Satan except, no higher sat.—  
MILTON.

We have already seen (See Chapter 30, on Interrogative Pronouns) that there is a tendency to make *who* a colorless word as to case, especially when used inter-

rogatively, and when the governing word is far removed, as,

Who should I see in the lid of it [a snuffbox] but the Doctor?—ADDISON.

“Who,” I exclaimed, “can we consult but Miss P.?”—MRS. HUMPHREY WARD.

Perhaps one reason for the loss of case in such sentences as, “Who are you speaking of?” is that *who* is felt to be in a sense the logical subject, as if the sentence were, “Who is it that you are speaking of?”

There are many instances in literature where *who* seems to be used objectively, as,

Tell who loves who.—DRYDEN.

I'll tell you who Time ambles withall, who Time trots withall, who Time gallops withall, and who he stands still withall.—SHAKESPEARE.

This ignoring of case form is sometimes extended to the relative use of *who*. Schmidt's Lexicon of Quotations from Shakespeare gives fifteen instances of the interrogative and twelve of the relative use of *who* in objective relations. It is to be noted, however, that the early editions of Shakespeare have *who* in many cases where the later ones have *whom*. The influence of schoolmasters is here shown. There are also instances in literature where what may be called a super-grammatical sense has attracted *whom* into relations where it was not required, as,

Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?—BIBLE.

While case variations are very common in literature, colloquial variations are carried much farther still.

Some of the dialects used in England show such expressions as, "Is that him? No. It's no him; it's just me."

The following couplet is said to be taken from a Hampshire churchyard:

"Him shall never come again to we  
But us shall surely go one day to he."

Cowper uses this colloquialism with humorous effect:

"You shall ride on horseback after we."

To sum up this discussion:—

The English pronouns still have case forms, and the use of the wrong case form is perhaps one of the most conspicuous faults in grammatical usage that can be made. Yet in not a few expressions (more or less idiomatic) usage differs widely. The pronoun case forms are to some extent in a state of flux. It is the part of grammarians to be conservative in resisting changes that may be detrimental to the purity of the language. Yet there are limits beyond which it is useless for dogmatic criticism to go. One should keep one's eyes open to the tendencies, and seek to understand the reasons for the variations, and then decide in a given case with discrimination as well as conservatism, trying always to preserve whatever is worth preserving in the inflectional forms that are still left to the English tongue.

## LV

### WORDS OF PECULIAR OR VARIED USES

Not only does the same word serve now in one capacity and now in another, but also it constantly occurs that the characteristics of different parts of speech are manifested at one time by one word in its ordinary sense.—DAVENPORT AND EMERSON.

The word *it* is the greatest troubler that I know of in language.—COBBETT.

The instrument ever adapting itself to the uses which it is to subserve.—WHITNEY.

There are a few words that are so often used in peculiar relations or are capable of taking so many different uses that they may well be made the subject of special grammatical examination. These are for the most part small indeclinable words of little specialized meaning, and for this reason capable of filling grammatical gaps.

A good exercise in grammar is to take a certain word and trace it through all its idiomatic uses, writing sentences that will illustrate all the uses to which the word can be put.

One of these words is the neuter pronoun *it*, sometimes called the indefinite or impersonal pronoun. A comprehensive study of the word would begin with its earlier form *hit* and trace also the gradual introduction

of its modern possessive form *its*. To-day the poet still uses *his* where the philosopher says *its*. Some of the impersonal, expletive, and other uses of *it* have been already noticed. In the games of children *it* has a wide-spread and peculiar use as a proper noun, as, "It is now my turn to be *IT*."

*What* is a word of very varied relationship. Its uses as pronoun and adjective, both in relative and interrogative relations should be illustrated; also its use as an interjection, as, "What! do you really mean it?"

Other idiomatic uses of *what* may be illustrated as follows:

"He found a miscellaneous collection of shells, stones, chips, and *what not.*"

"What though the day be lost, all is not lost,"

"In building of chaises I tell you what,"

"What with this, what with that,"

These expressions with *what* are usually very elliptical, and it is not always easy to see what the ellipsis has been. They may be recognized as current idioms of English, even when the history of the idiom is in a degree lost.

Similar treatment may be given to *as*, which may be either conjunction or adverb, or both combined, and is occasionally used as a relative pronoun as, "Such as I have give I thee," *i. e.*: "Those which I have," etc.

The correlative relations of *as* with such, same, so, etc., should be specially noticed, also the connection of

as with certain stereotyped phrases, *as for me, as yet, as far as I am able*, etc.

The important verbal form *be* may be either infinitive, subjunctive, imperative, or an auxiliary in a verbal phrase. As a finite verb *be* is now always subjunctive or imperative, but it formerly had an indicative use also, as, "Ye be righteous men." In provincial dialect we still sometimes hear this ancient indicative used by rural citizens as, "Be you going to plant potatoes in that field?"

The verbs *do* and *have* when used as principal verbs have a very definite and specialized meaning, but this is almost wholly lost in their auxiliary relations. *Have* especially shows the results of change in its use and meaning. Beginning as a principal verb with the idea of possession it loses this almost wholly when made an auxiliary for the perfect tense. The idea given by *have* in these phrases is that of completed state or action, rather than of possession. The original idea of *have* as *possess*, also included the idea of *to hold* and so *to esteem*, which gave rise to the idiom *had rather*. *Have* has gained also a modern meaning of obligation, giving rise to such expressions, as, "I have to do it."

"Have at thee!" illustrates another ancient idiom now out of use.

As a subjunctive *had* frequently begins a sentence, as, "Had I the power, I would not use it."

*Get* as a principal verb means *to obtain*, as, "Get wisdom, get understanding," but it is sometimes needlessly used with *have* to denote possession, as, "I have

got five sisters," "Have you got anything to say?" *Get* has acquired certain auxiliary uses in colloquial idiom that take the place of a kind of passive, as, "To get married," "You must get excused." Many conventional idiomatic phrases are also formed with *get*, as "get away," "get off," "get up," "get through," etc.

It is obviously impossible in one brief chapter to name or illustrate all the peculiar uses of these variable words. Some of these have been noticed in other chapters of this book. Most of the indeclinable words of the language admit of varied uses. A few of the more prominent ones are here appended with illustrations of some of their special variations in relationship.

*All.* All in all, at all, all but enough, all forlorn.

When *all* is used adverbially with an adjective it is often connected by a hyphen, as, all-holy. There is a tendency in some quarters to make a closer compound of "all right" (*i. e.*: *alright*), as is done in *already*.

*But.* He is but a man.

None knew him but to love him.

All but he (but him?) had fled.

There was not a child but knew his lesson that day.

Who knows but I may go too?

*The.* The more, the merrier.

*Each.* Each other.

*Else.* How else can it be done?

Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it.

Any one else.

*Little.* It matters little.

Give me a little.

*Like.* Like produces like.

Like as a father pitith his children, etc.

She sings like a bird.

The use of *like* as a conjunction, as "he talks like he was crazy," is in common colloquial use in certain regions, but is not sustained by literary usage. *Like* was originally an adjective or adverb, and followed by *to* or *unto*, as "Like unto the Son of Man." It has acquired the prepositional use (*to* being now omitted), and there seems to be no absolute and inherent reason why it should not acquire a conjunctive use as well. The extensive use of *like* in some sections seems to show that in many minds *like* expresses a more definite idea than is given by *as if*. Yet *like* will probably not be adopted at present as a conjunction, either for literary use or in the language of most educated people.

*Hard.* Hard by.

*While.* Worth while.

While away the time.

*Over.* Turn over.

Over a mile.

Over against the house.

*Ever* and *never*. Ever so good. Never so well.

*Save.* Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight.

*So.* The fact is so. How are you? So-so. He is  
so (colloquial and a provincialism).

I care not, so I be not found wanting.

*Than.* It is no other than John.

Than whom. (See Chapter 54 on Case Shiftings.)

The labor of searching out and collecting such idiomatic usages of various important words, is of great value to grammar students, arousing interest, and leading them into true lines of grammatical thinking.

Most of the prepositions, conjunctions, modal adverbs, adjective pronouns, and in fact most of the indeclinable words of English have acquired idiomatic usages, and may be thus treated.

## LVI

### INTERMEDIATE GRAMMATICAL CONSTRUCTIONS

Why, sir, it is easier to tell what it is *not*. We all know what Light is not, but it is not easy to tell what it is.—  
BOSWELL'S LIFE OF JOHNSON.

"There are blendings or hoverings of two constructions in all languages."

"We should not deny the reasonableness of classification, but insist on an inevitable indefiniteness in the boundaries between classes—just as in the prism no line can be drawn which separates one color from another."

In English the logical connections between words extend over a wider area than the purely grammatical ones.—SWEET.

And if such things are too hard for children then grammar is too hard, for there neither is nor can be any grammar without them.—R. JOHNSON'S GRAMMATICAL CONVERSATIONS.

The indeterminate (or intermediate) form of English words and phrases, the same form fulfilling various relations, is one of the most striking characteristics in English.—JOYNES.

Grammatical relationships often shade into one another by almost imperceptible gradations. There are a few well defined types of construction. But there is also many a word or phrase which lacks some marks of the type with which it is usually classed, or which has certain additional marks belonging to another type.

The verb *be* in its original sense is an attributive verb. In the sentence, "God *is*, and therefore we *are*," it is an absolute verb of existence, and the sentence contains no other attribute. But in "I am ready," it is a pure copula, and has no attributive idea. In "I am here," or "Where I am, there shall my people be," the verb seems to have something of its original idea of existence combined with a hovering sense of a copulative office that is also found in it. In "I am here and ready," *here* and *ready* are treated as co-ordinate terms after a copulative verb.

It is manifest that there is much similarity in the predicate terms of,

- Thomas is late.
- Thomas is behind time.
- Thomas is absent.
- Thomas is not here.
- Thomas is in the garden.

If the first of these be an adjective it is easy to find some adjective character in all the others.

But it is equally true that a close analogy exists in the sentences,

- Thomas is in the garden.
- Thomas stands in the garden.
- Thomas works in the garden.

and the adverbial element that is evident in the last sentence seems in some degree to be present in them all.

In spite of their resemblance, however, there are real differences in sentences like these, and the study

of these minute differences with a view to classification is a valuable exercise in grammar.

The essential kinship of adjectives with adverbs manifest in these sentences is further shown by the fact that in poetic expression the adjective form usually takes the place of the adverbial, as, "Sleep soft, beloved, we sometimes say." It is also illustrated in participial phrases expressing accompanying action, as,

The boy walked on, *throwing the ball.*  
He came *running.*

In an inflected language such participles would agree in case with the subject, yet it requires little discernment to see that the verb also is to some extent modified.

In such sentences as, "He walks erect," *walks* has been called a sort of half-copula, the word *erect* combining to some extent the relations of both attribute and adverbial modifier.

*Here* and *there* and some other adverbs have occasionally a kind of adjective use, as, "the man *here.*" Yet we do not say, "the *here* man."

Few elements of a sentence are more distinct than the direct object and the adverbial modifier. Yet through various modifications of the indirect object the line of division seems sometimes almost obliterated.

Verbs taking two objects (one meaning a person and the other a thing) sometimes sustain to each object a relationship so close that some grammarians (following the analogy of the Latin rule for two accusatives) would call both of the objects direct. But, laying aside

all thought of Latin accusatives and datives, can any one see in the purely logical relations of the English sentence, any good reason for finding two direct objects in,

He taught me the phrase,

and at the same time calling "John" the indirect object in the following?

He forgave John the fault.

He struck John a blow.

Can any one find the exact line of division between indirect object and adverbial phrase among these sentences?

Let me find you the place.

I will find for you the place.

I accepted the invitation for you.

I told him the circumstances.

I told him of the circumstances.

¶ I carried him the apple.

I carried the book to the children.

I carried the book to his room.

Another series of finely graded relationships may be found in the element variously known as objective predicate or attributive object. Who is able to distinguish perfectly between this construction and that of indirect object in these sentences?

They thought him wise.

They wished him to be wise.

They wished him to stay.

They asked him to stay.

They asked him a question.  
They asked of him a favor.  
They advised him to stay.  
They advised him that he should stay.

But how shall the grammarian deal with these intermediate constructions? First, let him ask himself, What is the end to be gained by the classification of the logical relations of language? Is it that one may become an expert in "disposing of" all the words and phrases of literature? Then would grammar be a useless study indeed! Too much of what is called grammatical discussion is the belittling effort to explain away the intrinsic beauties of language. There is no small harm in trying to wrest good English to fit grammatical law. Who is so learned that he can claim to fully interpret all the idioms of our English tongue?

Syntax is based on logic, and in almost every sentence can be found one or more words bearing logical relations to several others at the same time. Inflected languages point out by inflectional terminations the most prominent of these relations. In English, a change in emphasis or in the position of a single word may bring into prominence a new set of logical relations. Many a reader finds in a sentence elements of thought which the author of the sentence never conceived of. The varied relations of many English words show something of the nature of the language in this respect. In not a few cases more than one of the relations which a given word can hold will be present in the same phrase construction. The case shiftings of the pronouns also show the blend-

ing or hovering sense of two relations which many a word can carry. If this is found to a considerable extent in the pronoun relations, it is even more conspicuous in the indeclinable words which are so easily changed from one part of speech to another and which form so large a part of the English speech.

The student of English should examine carefully all the main types of grammatical relation, and then apply the tests of these types to the elements of various sentences. But let him not be disconcerted by the fact that many a word or phrase may lack some of the marks of the standard, or may combine the marks of several distinct types, or may be even capable of more than one sound interpretation or explanation.

In the interpretation of these intermediate constructions, grammarians have always differed and will continue to differ. But when a word holds multiplied relationships in a sentence it is not a matter of large consequence that different minds give somewhat varying prominence to the several relations.

To be many-sided in the study of grammar is a very different thing from being superficial. It is this very element of gradation in grammatical construction that makes English syntax a broadening subject if rightly pursued. The best result of syntactical study is clearness in thinking and the power of making logical distinctions. If this be gained, it will act strongly, though indirectly, toward the increase of real language power.

## LVII

### THE “SPLIT INFINITIVE”\*

The rule given by grammarians, “*To*, the sign of the infinitive, should never be separated from its verb,” should be modified by the clause, “unless the meaning can be more clearly expressed by the insertion of the adverb.”—J. T. BAKER, IN CORRECT ENGLISH.

The usage of the split infinitive has been violently contested by rhetoricians, yet has gained ground. In some cases it has the advantage of bringing an adverb into an emphatic position. In other cases it is very awkward.—CARPENTER.

“The split infinitive is a synthetical combination now establishing itself.”

Every day is confirming the usage. It will stay because it was needed, and is unquestionably a clear gain in logical precision.—JOYNES.

This practice, examples of which go as far back certainly as the fifteenth century, has now become quite common. In spite of the opposition it encounters there is little question that it will establish itself permanently in the language.—LOUNSBURY.

The insertion of a modifying word between the sign *to* and the infinitive has been greatly censured by gram-

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\*The “split infinitive” so-called, is comprehensively treated in an article by Professor Lounsbury, of Yale University, entitled “To and the Infinitive,” and published in *Harper’s Magazine* of April, 1904.

marians, on the ground that we must not divide a part of speech.

But the history of the infinitive shows that *to* is in no sense an integral part of the infinitive. It was never used originally with the ordinary infinitive, but only with its dative (sometimes called its gerundial) form. The extension of the sign *to* to the common infinitive during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was itself at that time a language corruption. Many infinitive forms (as in verb phrases) are still used without the sign *to*.

Yet even if *to* were essential to the construction, the reason is by no means obvious why the verbal noun should be debarred from having a closely-joined modifier any more than any other noun that follows the preposition *to*, as in the phrases "to this end," "to my father."

But a question of propriety is finally one of good usage. More than twenty years ago Dr. Fitzedward Hall showed conclusively that this separation of the infinitive from its sign has occasionally been made by good writers in all periods since about the fourteenth century. Beginning with Wycliffe who wrote "to never have received" and "to evermore trow," he gives examples of this use from a host of writers including Peacock, Sir John Fortescue, Tyndale, Sir Thomas Browne, Bentley, De Foe, Dr. Johnson, Burke, Southey, Coleridge, Lamb, De Quincy, Matthew Arnold, Charles Reade, Ruskin, Herbert Spencer, and Leslie Stephen.

To Dr. Hall's list could be added examples from Franklin, Byron, Keats, the Brownings, Lowell, Holmes, and

many other prominent English and American writers.

Yet it must be conceded that in spite of this imposing array of names, the general practice of good writers until recently has been against this separation. For some of the writers quoted (as Dr. Johnson) a single example of its use is all that could probably be given. With others the use seems to have been confined to certain stereotyped phrases, as, "To far exceed" used by Burke. Although Browning and some others used such forms freely, Tennyson certainly abstained and perhaps never used one.

Grammarians also have always been on the opposing side. Goold Brown indeed tells us that the right to place an adverb between the sign *to* and the infinitive must be conceded to poets, and quotes from Burns's poem, "The Cotter's Saturday Night," the line,

"Who dared to nobly stem tyrannic pride,"

where the meter of the verse may be thought to have imposed its form upon the construction.

But usage which can lay restrictions upon language can also remove those restrictions. Within the last fifty years there has been a growing feeling that it is to the advantage of the language that the separation should sometimes be made.

Thus Macaulay wrote in 1840, "In order fully to appreciate the character of Lord Holland it is necessary to go back into the history of his family." But in 1843 he brought out an edition of his essays carefully revised in which the phrase reads, "In order to fully appreciate

the character," etc. Macaulay was never careless in his modes of expression, and the change evidently shows his mature thought on this subject.

The influence of modern journalism with its insistence on conciseness has been strongly in favor of this practice, as making often a much more compact phrase, or giving truer emphasis to the important idea, as in,

To almost succeed is not enough.

Indeed it would be difficult to find a substitute for the divided infinitive in such a phrase as, "to more than counterbalance." There are certain conventional phrases, however, as "never-to-be forgotten," in which the adverb is never inserted within the phrase.

Some careful writers of to-day, who have been trained in the older school of literature, seldom use a "split infinitive," or do so with hesitation only when there is clearly a gain in meaning or in energy. But probably the words of Professor Lounsbury are justifiable, when he says:

"It is clear that most of those who now refrain from the practice under discussion no longer do so instinctively as was once the case, but rather under compulsion. They refrain, not because they feel that it is unnatural or unidiomatic but because they have been told that it is improper. Artificial bulwarks of this sort will never hold back long a general movement of speech. . . . The time, indeed, will come when men will be unaware that there has ever been any dispute about the matter at all."

## LVIII

### DISPUTED POINTS IN GRAMMAR

Grammar appeals to reason as well as to authority, but to what extent it should do so has been matter of dispute.—  
GOOLD BROWN.

“The same fact thought of in different ways may make perplexing differences in construction.”

A fallacy,—that of two ways of expression one must be wrong.—DEAN ALFORD.

And for there is so great diversitie  
In English and in writing of our tong  
So pray I to God that none miswrite thee.

—CHAUCER.

“Baith did fight,  
And baith did win,  
And baith did rin awa’.”

In the multiplicity of subjects that invite the world’s attention questions of grammatical propriety sometimes seem of minor importance. Many minds absorbed in other interests are content to believe that their own language does not differ greatly from that of the persons around them, and are willing to let alone the finer and more subtle questions of linguistic usage.

Yet there is an increasing number of persons—educators, literary men, and other cultivated minds—who prefer to be among those who mould language and decide in regard to its finer distinctions, rather than with

those who follow blindly rules that have been laid down for them by others. The vigorous discussion that arose over the number form of the verb, after the publication of Kipling's line,

"The shouting and the tumult dies,"

gave evidence that questions of grammatical propriety are of real interest to the modern world.

Some of the questions that receive discussion among grammarians themselves deal with the grammatical relationships of words or phrases, and with the logical interpretation of accepted idioms. These are of interest to scholars, and the determining of these furnishes tests of construction that can be applied in deciding the correctness or incorrectness of other expressions of more doubtful propriety. Yet in these purely logical and scientific questions the general public is not greatly interested.

But in questions of practical usage all intelligent minds have a personal interest. Among the expressions which one hears there are not a few that are manifestly wrong, and require no discussion. There are provincialisms, solecisms, and vulgarisms, that must be condemned, but that scarcely need to be argued about.

Among the grosser ones may be named impure contractions, as, *don't* with a subject of the third person singular (He *don't*), and the bastard form *ain't* (I *ain't*); *them* used as an adjective (*them apples*), *those* limiting *kind* or *sort* (*those sort of people*); *real* as an

adverb (It is real pretty) and the interchange of the principal parts of strong verbs (He done it.) More subtle are the errors of "dangling participles," unrelated clauses, and the mistakes in arrangement and agreement that come from confusions of thought. A general knowledge of grammar ought usually to be a sufficient defense against such impurities as these.

The questions of most interest relate to the toleration or deliberate adoption of certain alleged improprieties under special conditions that seem to invite their use. For instance, the usual position of the word *only* is just before the word which it modifies, yet there are occasions when smoothness of style is gained by placing it in some other position, as, "I will only mention some of the best." In spite of the protests of rigid grammarians, the use of *either* in offering a choice among more than two objects seems to be increasing, and is supported in a measure by some of the modern dictionaries. There is also some good reason for this allowance, as *any* implies plurality and is less definitive, while *any one* seems needlessly labored and formal.

The comparative form is sometimes accorded to an adjective of absolute meaning, as, "more universal," "less complete." Again, where the stickler for exactness would say "Come to see me," the use of *and* (as, Come and see me) is often tolerated and is illustrated in the Scripture words of Jesus, "Come and see." "And they came and saw where he dwelt." And yet again, some would prefer the softened and less egoistic expression, "I do not think so," where others may

insist that the precise thought to be expressed is, "I think it is not so."

Shall we say "the three first" or "the first three"?

Are the relative pronouns *that*, and *who* or *which*, to be sharply differentiated? The reciprocal pronoun phrases, *each other* and *one another*? The interjections *O* and *oh*? May we use *whose* as the possessive of *which*? And may we use the possessive case when possession is not indicated, as, "the waves' roar?"

Has the interrogative *who* become indeterminate in case form?

Shall *me* be used attributively (It is me)?

Has the subjunctive had its day?

Has the "split infinitive" established its claim to recognition?

How far may the general sense of a passage, rather than the strict number form of a subject or an antecedent, determine the forms of agreement for verbs and pronouns?

All these and many other questions receive unlike answers at the hands of different speakers and writers and grammarians.

The question of correctness in speech and writing is largely one of usage; but it is also one of good sense. The final arbiter in the decision for the man of education will be his own practical and cultivated judgment, which tries to weigh carefully all the facts and principles of historic and comparative grammar as well as those of actual and widespread contemporaneous usage, and then chooses from among the available

forms of expression the one that gives with the greatest force and smoothness and the fewest objections the clearest utterance of his own inner thought. One should be conservative in this judgment, however, and not let down the bars to impurities of speech except for good and sufficient reasons.

## LIX

### CHANGES IN THE GRAMMAR OF ENGLISH\*

English is not a dead language. It grows from roots in the lower soil.—*N. Y. Independent.*

"A dead language neither gains nor loses. English still has the vital sap flowing."

The process of dropping inflections seems nearly to have reached its limit, yet there are two forms of the verb which we may even now see undergoing the process of reduction.  
—SOUTHWORTH.

Every falling away of inflection is followed by some new synthetical formation, as the loss of mood ending brought in the auxiliaries.—KELLNER.

The evolution of language shows a progressive tendency from inseparable irregular conglomerations to freely and regularly combinable short elements.—JESPERSEN.

The English language is developing daily according to its needs. It is casting aside words and usages that are no longer satisfactory; it is adding new terms as new things are brought forward, and it is making new usages as convenience suggests, to the neglect of the five-barred gates rigidly set up by our ancestors.—BRANDER MATTHEWS.

These changes are the result of natural tendencies of the organs of speech and of the human mind, and are therefore to a great extent uniform in their operation.—SWEET.

\*Some of the points mentioned in this and in the following chapter are referred to also in the preceding chapters under the appropriate heads. It seemed desirable, however, that there should be a brief summary of these important facts.

The vicissitudes of language are a thing over which our volitions rarely have a calculable control.—FITZEDWARD HALL.

It may not be possible to stem the tide, but certainly the efforts of teachers and text-books should be directed towards keeping the language free from conflicting and weakening forms of speech.—SOUTHWORTH.

The great innovator Time manages his innovations so dexterously, spreads them over such vast periods, and so gradually, that often while effecting the highest changes he seems to be effecting none at all.—TRENCH.

The fluidity of the English language is a fluidity not like that of a river, but rather like that of a glacier, the movement of which is noted by years or generations rather than by days.—N. Y. *Independent*.

The universal law of change and progression applies to all forms of knowledge, and grammar is no exception. At first thought this may not seem to be the case. The tendency and effort of grammar is to fix the condition of the language by forbidding irregularities that produce confusion. Thus the formulas of grammarians and the language of literature are much the same wherever English is spoken. It is the colloquial expressions of uneducated people that show the most tendency to fluctuation.

Yet there are real changes in the facts of language with which grammar deals. They are slow in their operation and it requires careful study and the comparison of the literature of different ages to trace their order of progression.

All the language changes are the result of natural tendencies in the human mind, and of social development. The speakers and writers of the language do not decree such changes. They can to some extent modify and retard tendencies that they think are harmful to the language. In fact if they did not to some extent control these changes the language of two successive generations would become mutually unintelligible. But the laws that lead to change are never inactive. Ours is a living and growing language and this fact must be recognized in all forms of language study.

Most of the changes in language come in the field of diction, and are therefore etymological rather than grammatical. Yet some of these word changes have a grammatical bearing as well. A large increase in vocabulary comes by converting one part of speech into another. With extraordinary license English takes words of all classes and uses them as nouns. Thus we speak of a "walk" through the fields, the "up and down" of a piece of cloth, the "whys" and "wherefores" of an argument. With nearly equal freedom nouns become adjectives and both of these classes become verbs. We speak of a "university" man, a "provision" store; we "black" our boots, and "idle" away our time. A girl "queens" it among her companions, and the poet reminds us that "a man may *gentle* his condition."

When a word in its passage from one part of speech into another carries with it the limiting terms of its

original state, a new grammatical relation is acquired. In the expression "a run on the beach" the prepositional phrase "on the beach" has been changed from an adverbial to an adjective character by the new noun meaning given to *run*. The key to not a few grammatical puzzles can be found in the simple fact that the word at the basis of the peculiar phrase was originally of another part of speech and has carried its belongings with it into the new associations.

A careful study of the prefixes and suffixes used in making one part of speech from another throws much light on the relations of the parts of speech among themselves. Thus we add *ness* to an adjective to make an abstract noun, as greenness, goodness. *Ly* added to an adjective gives a strictly adverbial word, as, slowly, firmly. *Er* or *or* with a verb makes a noun, as, actor, singer. There are many such semi-grammatical laws that govern word formations.

Changes in inflection come far more slowly than those of diction, and are usually subtractions from the language rather than additions to it. The study of comparative grammar shows that the languages of Europe have tended toward an analytical character, away from the synthetic or highly-inflected types that belonged to Sanskrit, Greek and Latin. Modern languages tend to break away from inflected forms, and to make large use of short indeclinable words that can be separated from each other and recombined into new phrases at pleasure. All the languages of southern Europe have shown this tendency, but English

has gone farther in this direction than any other European tongue.

In such a process prepositions usually come in first, and are brought to the aid of the inflectional form. Later the inflection itself seems needless, and the weight of the relation seems to fall on the preposition. The inflection may then live on, as an ancient fashion, or under changing social conditions there may be a shedding of inflections which are not really needed to show the logical relations.

Such a history belongs to the Saxon tongue. For a time it had both the inflections and the prepositions; then with the general shake-up that came to the language after the Norman Conquest, the inflections were largely cast off as a burden that could be dispensed with.

With this loss of inflections came other changes as well. The order of words in the sentence became more rigid. Old English with its large elements of agreeing forms was naturally careless of word order. There was little danger of related words getting detached in thought since the forms showed the logical connections. Some grammarians have maintained that it was the strengthening of word order first that made the inflections unnecessary so that they fell away. But it is needless to affirm too definitely as to the relations of cause and effect here. The loss of inflections and the strengthening of word order went on simultaneously, each process aiding and hastening the other.

The loss of the inflectional form gave a new syntactical freedom to words, making it possible not only that they should be transferred easily from one part of speech to another, but especially that they should be able to hold several relations at the same time. The intermediate constructions in English—the same word fulfilling several functions—is one of the most marked results of this falling off of inflectional agreements.

Although in general the loss of inflections comes to a language very gradually, there is in the history of English one apparent exception to this principle of slow change, owing to a peculiar epoch in English history in which two peoples became united into one. During about two hundred years, while the Saxons and Normans were becoming amalgamated, the process went on with comparative rapidity, and at the end of that period there was a new language. At least the English tongue had undergone such large modifications as to make the literature of the periods before and after this epoch distinct in language characteristics. Yet the grammar of modern English is, nevertheless, deeply rooted in the grammar of the old Saxon tongue.

But there were various nations in the old Saxon heptarchy. Their languages, or dialects, had differing grammatical forms, and our remaining old English inflections have come to us from various sections of Britain. Yet the legacies are not equally from all the dialects. The great writers of the fourteenth century, Robert of Brunne, Wycliffe, Gower and Chaucer, used the dialect of the east Midland. Their popularity and

the wide circulation of their writings made this dialect the literary language of England.

The northern dialect continued to be used, but had little or no literature. At last it seemed strange to the English people and they refused to call it English but called it Scotch. It was the language of Burns and of Scott, and is to-day more like old English than English itself.

Old English, in the form in which it has been preserved, was a highly inflected language. It had six cases of nouns, nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, vocative, and a case similar to the ablative which has been called the instrumental case. The noun plurals were formed on various patterns, of which a few examples have come down to us in such words as, oxen, mice. We call them irregular plurals but they are remnants of old regular declensions.

Adjectives and participles had case agreements with the nouns. Verbs were of various conjugations, and the remnants of all these conjugations except one (the one making its past tense in *ed*) we now group together as one conjugation of strong verbs. The one in *ed* we have retained as the rule of the language and call it the new, or weak, or regular conjugation.

With the coming of William the Conqueror a new set of language forces was introduced. The early pages of *Ivanhoe* have an interesting scene between Wamba and the Swineherd, showing the relations which the Norman and Saxon languages naturally assumed in the range of vocabulary—the animals,

*swine* and *ox*, retaining their Saxon names while under the Swineherd, but becoming *pork* and *beef* when reduced to articles of commerce and served in the dining-hall of a Norman castle.

But with the grammatical character of the language the results were different. The Normans did not know the Saxon inflections and dropped them whenever they could make logical connections without them. As a result English is a virtually uninflected language but retains various shreds of the old forms and agreements.

For a century or two after the Conquest, there was a period of broken Saxon, known as early English, the Norman language also being used by some. During the period 1350–1550 English became moulded into the national language, gradually acquiring most of its present characteristics. Since that time it is essentially modern English.

In the early years after the Conquest many Norman words found their way into common use. During the fifteenth century Latin was used extensively by learned men. The fashion became so extravagant that it was at last made the occasion of satire. Men laughed at “ink-horn words.”

Butler (in *Hudibras*) thus describes this style of foreign English:

“A Babylonish dialect  
Which learned pedants much affect,  
'Twas English cut on Greek and Latin  
Like fiction heretofore on Satin.”

But under the influence of classical study many

words derived from Greek and Latin roots found their way into English. Modern science also draws its nomenclature largely from these sources, so that new words of classical origin are continually coming into English.

But while the more significant words of the English vocabulary, nouns, adjectives, and verbs, have come in immense numbers from Norman French, Greek and Latin, all or nearly all the connecting and filling-in parts of speech,—the prepositions, conjunctions, modal adverbs, articles, adjective pronouns, personal pronouns, and auxiliaries, are Saxon in origin. And since the inflections that have been retained are also Saxon, it may be said that while English is much mixed in *vocabulary*, its *grammar* is purely Saxon.

The invention of printing in the fifteenth century gave fixity to the forms then in use. But perhaps no single influence in this direction has been stronger than that of the English Bible. Wycliffe's and Tyndale's Bibles, especially the latter, did something in this direction. But after King James's version, published in 1611, became the "Authorized Version," and the rise and spread of Puritanism gave tremendous influence to this book throughout the kingdom, the expressions used in the Bible became familiar and entered into the language of all. A similar influence has been exerted upon the German language by Luther's Bible.

Although the dropping of inflections nearly reached its limit several centuries ago the language has not been stationary since then. Looking over the four hundred

years of the modern English period, we find not a few grammatical changes in all the parts of speech, and the tendencies to change are still active. During this long period nouns have established their modern possessive form, have reduced greatly the number of their irregular plurals, and their feminine forms. The old noun compounds, including such gender forms as *manchild*, *he-goat*, have mostly gone out of use.

The pronouns *thou* and *ye* have been relegated to archaic or poetic uses, *its* has found its way into the language, *his* and *her* have restricted their gender significations, *mine* and *thine* have become absolute pronoun forms, and certain old relative and interrogative pronouns, as *whosoever*, *whatso*, *whether*, have dropped out of general use.

Adjectives are more strict in their modes of comparison, and they no longer double their comparative and superlative forms.

Among verbs, some strong verbs and many strong forms of verbs have gone out of use, subjunctive forms have become few, auxiliary verbs have enlarged their functions, *shall* and *will* phrases have been modified, and many new verbal phrases have grown into favor.

Many adverbs, prepositions and conjunctions have enlarged their sentence functions, and special words among them have defined more precisely their meaning and usages.

Certain constructions, as impersonal sentences and absolute participial phrases, are more rare than formerly and the dative (or accusative) case used by Milton as

the absolute case has given way to the nominative.

A comparison of modern English with the language of King James's version of the Bible published in 1611 is one of the best ways of discovering how far English grammar has changed in the last three hundred years. Shakespeare's works offer a similar opportunity for profitable comparison, and Abbott's *Shakesperian Grammar* gives convenient and scholarly assistance in this work.

The most conspicuous difference which the Bible of 1611 shows from the English of to-day is in the constant use of *thou* and *ye*, and the verbal forms in *est* and *eth*, which give to the writing that peculiar structure which we call solemn or ancient style.

The extensive use of subjunctives (If he find it, Though he slay me) and of the "shall of prophecy," the absence of many of our modern verb phrases, the occasional use of obsolete verbs (wist, wot, wit, trow, etc.), or of archaic verbal forms (holpen, spat), or of verbs with an obsolete meaning (let, prevent), the use of *be* as an indicative (Ye be spies), of *did* as an auxiliary for the ordinary past tense (I did eat), the lack of an auxiliary in negative and interrogative sentences (Lacked ye anything?), the use of *for* before the infinitive (for to see); all these things and many more show the decided changes that English grammar has been making especially in its verb forms.

The use of *his* and *her* without sex signification (Every tree is known by his fruit), the use of *which* where the modern word would be *who* (Our Father

which art in Heaven), the use of impersonal sentences (It sufficeth me), of expletive objects (Saddle *me* the ass), of the intransitive phrase with *be* rather than *have* (I am come that they might have life), the use of *to* after *like* (like to a sardine stone); all these testify to the movements that have been taking place in English grammar since 1611.

In sentences as a whole time brings changes. It is the custom of the modern age to make shorter sentences than of old, to have fewer long participial and infinitive constructions. It has been estimated that Edmund Spenser's average sentence was forty-nine words, Macaulay's twenty-three, Emerson's twenty. As the style of thought changes, the "genius of the language" modifies its constructions to suit the new mental mood.

Within the memory of living people some grammatical changes in English may be perceived. The subjunctive mood, the forms of strong verbs, the gender forms of nouns are not quite what they were a generation ago. The "split infinitive" has become more common and finds defenders among present-day grammarians, and various idiomatic usages have been gaining or losing in public favor.

The question of the proper attitude of grammarians and of educated people in general toward these language changes is an important one. There is a sense in which a language should be encouraged to follow its own bent, and to adapt itself to the changing needs of the people who use it. Yet if there is no restraining tendency the generations will not keep in touch with

one another. People of different countries who originally spoke the same language will find their speech mutually unintelligible and the language will break up into dialects. This has sometimes been the case. Thus Scotch has differentiated itself from English; thus also the three countries of Scandinavia, originally one, have now different languages; thus also the Taal spoken by the Hollanders of South Africa is so different from the language of the Dutch people that Dutch literature cannot easily be understood by those whose native language is still supposed to be Dutch.

The man of education who understands and values his native tongue should watch the flowing currents with sympathy and yet with caution. While a general attitude of conservatism should be maintained, distinction should be made between those changes which impoverish and those which merely simplify the language. Thus, the use of *who* for *whom* in questions produces no misunderstanding and tends toward simplicity, while the loss of the subjunctive *were* would result in a real weakening of language power.

Grammar then is the preservative of language, and the natural tendencies of the science are necessarily conservative. It is its business to keep out solecisms, and to prune away irregular growths that cannot show good reason for their existence. But the true grammarian will not try too strictly to "margin a living lake by rigid bounds." It is his privilege to be not only the critic but also the interpreter of language, both in regard to its past history and its present tendencies.

## LX

### GRAMMATICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGLISH\*

Poverty in grammatical forms is no drawback to a language.—JESPERSEN.

"The simplest of all languages in form, the most spiritual in the mode of expression."

English grammar is at once the simplest and most difficult of all the grammars.—ALLEN.

English enjoys the distinction of having freed itself from ancient and unnecessary inflections to a greater degree than any other language.—CARPENTER.

That language ranks highest which goes farthest in the art of accomplishing much with little means, or, in other words, which is able to express the greatest amount of meaning with the simplest mechanism.—JESPERSEN.

An elaborate linguistic structure with a variety of endings in declensions and conjugations, has certain advantages, but it may be that the advantages of the opposite simplicity are still greater.—SCHLEICHER.

Anglo-Saxon is the basis of English. All its joints, its whole articulation, sinews, ligaments, articles, pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions, numerals, and auxiliary verbs—all the words that bind together the sentence, are exclusively Saxon.—W. H. Low.

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\*Some of the facts given in this chapter are mentioned in other sections of this book. But a brief final summary of this subject seems desirable.

Hardly less wonderful, perhaps, than the extraordinary development of its vocabulary is the slow process by which English has changed from a synthetic to an analytical language. It has in this way gained greatly in simplicity, though it must be granted that there has been in some degree a loss in precision and in delicacy of expression.—SOUTHWORTH.

It is safe to say that the fixed word order, the freedom from inflections, the abundant use of prepositions and auxiliary verbs, which characterize modern English, are a distinct improvement upon the contrasted phenomena of the older languages.—TOLMAN.

Great is the English speech—what speech is so great as the English!—WALT WHITMAN.

English, however, is at the opening of the twentieth century the greatest language power in existence, and bids fair to become ultimately the universal tongue.—SOUTHWORTH.

It is in its vocabulary, as inherited, acquired and adapted, that English finds its highest claim to supremacy among languages.—JOYNES.

Grammar it (*i. e.*, English language) might have had, but it needes it not; being so easie of it selfe and so voyd of those cumbersome differences of cases, genders, moodes and tenses, which I thinke was a peece of the Tower of Babilon's curse that a man should be put to schoole to learne his mother tongue. But for the uttering sweetly and properly the conceits of the minde which is the end of speech that hath it equally with any other tongue in the world.—SIR PHILIP SIDNEY's APOLOGIE FOR POETRY. 1585.

The English is plenteous enough to express our myndes in anything whereof one man hath neede to speke with another.  
—SIR THOMAS MORE.

Most of our knowledge of our mother tongue comes to us by what are called Natural Methods, and the distinctive marks of the language being native to our thought are not always recognized clearly even when known correctly for use.

But the student should sometimes step outside his own relation to the language in order to look at it objectively, to compare and classify, to note its variations from other general language types and so gain a more explicit knowledge of its distinctive language forms. The scholar's knowledge of a language should be broader and deeper than that of one who would simply use the language as a vehicle of thought. The *reasons of English grammar* must underlie a scholarly knowledge of the subject.

English has inherited traits from the two kinds of languages that represent the two ruling races of Christendom, the Roman and the Germanic. Yet while many English words are of French or Latin or Greek extraction the grammar of English is mostly Teutonic in character. Its idioms are Anglo-Saxon and not Latin or French in their origin.

But modern English has diverged very far from the original Saxon type of language structure. Instead of being a highly inflected language, it is now one of the simplest of all languages in its word forms. While not in a condition of absolute simplicity like the Chinese—which requires a new word for every modification of an idea—it is yet nearer to this than any other language of Europe is, being made up very largely of

short indeclinable elements that can be readily combined into all needed logical arrangements.

Languages are often roughly classed into two groups as showing two types of grammatical structure. Of the synthetic or inflected type Latin is one of the best examples, while of the analytic type English is a pronounced illustration.

The active powers of English in making inflectional forms seem now to be reduced to the action of two or three very simple rules. The addition of *s* or *es* for plural nouns, of 's to denote possession, of *er* and *est* in the comparison of adjectives and of *s*, *ed*, *ing*, for verb forms, with *est* and *eth* in solemn or poetic style—these are all the present inflectional powers of English.

But while the active inflections of English are few and simple, there are various remnants of old inflections still remaining that seem to us to-day not so much like real inflections, as irregular forms with which certain ideas have become associated. These give trouble not only to foreigners but to native speakers of the language, and mar the ideal simplicity of English for universal use. Yet the political and commercial growth of the English-speaking peoples, together with the highly analytical character of the language itself is giving it an increasing importance among the languages of the world.

By the changes in its grammar English has acquired certain unique and high powers. The record has been one of progress, and not of decay or retrogression. The

simple form allowing free interchange of grammatical functions gives peculiar vigor to style. With some loss of freedom of arrangement, there is nevertheless an economy of words, and greater idiomatic power and clearness.

The power to transfer a word from one part of speech to another is remarkably developed in English. An especial prerogative seems to be the power to change almost any noun into a verb. Thus we "cable" our dispatches, and "phone" our verbal messages. We "table" a resolution and "bed" plants. Thus, also, Skakespeare's Portia uses the phrase, "Being so fathered and so husbanded."

There are also large classes of words, such as the adjective pronouns, that belong equally to two parts of speech. The power of a word to perform several functions at the same time is most remarkably developed. A majority of the connective terms (including relative pronouns, relative adjectives, and conjunctive adverbs of various types) unite in the same sentence the offices of two or more parts of speech.

English is very rich in its variety of verb phrases. Foreigners find it hard to learn these and English-speaking travelers find great difficulty in rendering all our verb phrases into the idiom of other tongues. Many irregular phrases, for instance, are in use as substitutes for the future tense. The following examples show different ways of expressing nearly the same future action.

I shall write.	I shall be writing.
I will write.	I will be writing.
I am to write.	I am to be writing.
I am going to write.	I am going to be writing.
I am about to write.	I am about to be writing.

To these might be added perhaps the interesting Hibernianism,

“I’ll be afther writing.”

“Is to be” is one of the most common future phrases, as, “He is to be married to-morrow.” The ordinary present tense may be used with future signification, as, “I go to-morrow,” and most of the potential auxiliaries may also be used so as to convey a future idea. It may fairly be said that in the abundance and flexibility of its verbal combinations English is not surpassed or perhaps equalled by any other language in the world.

English is not particularly rich in adjectives.

“Ho, for an epithet” is the mental ejaculation of many a writer in search of choice and fitting words with which to clothe his thoughts. In passing from one language into another adjectives change their meaning more than nouns or verbs do, and English adjectives are often quite different in meaning from the foreign adjectives to which by form they are allied.

A few idioms are very peculiar to English. Among these may be mentioned the use of the same term *self* as both a reflexive and an emphatic pronoun; the free omission of a relative pronoun in a restrictive adjective clause, as, “The man I met,” and the double or

cumulative possessive, as, "This speech of Caesar's."

To these may be added that form of a passive sentence in which the indirect object is made the subject, and the direct object is left in the predicate as a retained object, as, "I was given some oranges."

But the phenomena of modern English are not very thoroughly classified and known. The older stages of the language are of much interest to scholars and are more studied than the shifting phases of the present. Grammars and dictionaries are necessarily conservative, and are never quite up-to-date. But the study of these flowing currents and marks of modern English usage should be of great interest to students of language and of life. As has been well said,

Those who are born to be heirs of a highly analytical language must needs learn to think up to it.—THOMSON'S OUTLINES OF THE LAWS OF THOUGHT.

## PART SECOND

### I

#### RELATION OF GRAMMAR TO OTHER KINDS OF LANGUAGE STUDY

Even the analysis of sentences, important as it is, has its limits as a means of instruction and training.—BUEHLER.

It is intended that the study of literature be taken up as early in the course as is practicable, and continued in such a way as to supplement the technical part of the instruction.—LOCKWOOD.

To the question of how to become familiar with the best use, the first answer is, Read the best literature.—BUEHLER.

Practice in writing should be constant.—LOCKWOOD.

The teaching of English is difficult, its results often unsatisfactory.—JOYNES.

*Hamlet*.—Will you play upon this pipe?

*Gilderstern*.—My lord, I cannot.

*Hamlet*.—I pray you.

*Gilderstern*.—I cannot, I know no touch of it, my lord.

*Hamlet*.—'Tis as easy as lying. Govern these ventages with your finger and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most excellent music. Look you, these are the stops.

*Gilderstern*.—But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony.—I have not the *skill*.—SHAKESPEARE.

There are three distinct kinds of English study that

must enter into school work. They are adapted to different ends, and pursued by different methods. All of them are important, and each is defective if not supplemented by both of the others.

There is the formal or structural study of the language itself, known specifically as language study or linguistics.

In this department, grammar is the central study.

But the formal study of language includes also all that relates to spelling, pronunciation, etymology and all else that belongs to the scientific or formal make-up of spoken or written English. This line of work is chiefly technical. Its primary aim is to give the student control of his native tongue as an instrument that may be used for the higher ends of self expression. Yet grammatical study, by its appeal to the logical faculties has educative elements that are broader and deeper than belong to mere technical training.

This study of English on the structural side begins with the earliest grades of school; but it also reaches on with increasing interest and importance, through the historic and comparative philological study that belongs to high school and collegiate work.

A second kind of English study for schools is that which is pursued by literary methods and devoted to literary ends. The study of the literary treasures of a language has elements of culture which the structural study of language can never give. It touches the emotions and cultivates the taste. Its appeal is to the motives and the spiritual life of the soul. It is there-

fore a corrective for certain faults of mind that merely technical study sometimes induces.

The study of literature used to be thought of as belonging to the later part of school life. Yet even for the youngest children in schools there is literary material in abundance which can be studied for artistic ends. The study of literature, not in name but in its essence, should begin in the kindergarten and extend through all stages of school and college life.

But literary study as well as the technical study of language has its limitations. The study of a literary masterpiece is in a degree a receptive study. It does not always lead to active effort in the use of one's own language powers. It may even have a tendency to paralyze active literary effort, as one yields himself to the passive enjoyment of the work of others, or to the sense of discouragement sometimes induced by the disparaging comparisons which great writings invite toward all humbler performances. While the critical taste is cultivated, the creative faculty is not always aroused by the study of noble writings.

Both literary study and formal language study therefore need to be reinforced by plenty of practical composition work. By well-graded exercises and the use of stimulating motives the teacher should call forth the best creative energies of the pupil and lead him to the habit of free and correct expression of his own thoughts in both spoken and written English.

From the primary school to the university, then, these three lines of English study,—the formal or

structural, the literary or artistic, and the creative or practical—need to be pursued side by side, with no one of the three overshadowing, but each aiding and correcting the others, until by their joint actions and re-actions the student comes to deserve the praise once bestowed upon an English scholar, “He was well-languaged.”

## II

### RELATIONS OF THE STUDY OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR TO THE STUDY OF FOREIGN GRAMMARS

Most of us wish to learn other languages than our own. We can do this more easily and accurately if we understand how our own language is made and used.—WHITNEY AND LOCKWOOD.

It may fairly be said that the construction and comprehension of an English sentence demand and suppose the exercise of higher mental power than are required for framing or understanding a proposition in Latin.—WELSH.

There is a strong difference between the analytical study of English and that of a language of the highly inflected type. In Latin, for instance, the part of speech of a word and its logical relations are usually shown by its inflectional form. But in English it is chiefly the sense that must decide, and so the study of the English sentence has a disciplinary value that is all its own.

There are many teachers of foreign languages, and educated persons that have drunk deeply from the full cup of classical learning, who feel a doubt whether the study of English grammar can give much aid to the acquirement of foreign tongues.

It may well be granted that a knowledge of English inflections, so meagre, so incomplete, and seemingly

irregular as they all are, is but a slight aid to a study of inflection and inflectional agreements, in general grammar. The remnants of inflection that are left seem arbitrary and inconsistent, and seldom give an adequate impression of inflection in its true sense.

For a primary knowledge of grammatical inflections and what they signify, one must agree with the report made years ago by Mr. George H. Martin (at that time agent of the Massachusetts Board of Education, of which he is now the secretary), in which he said: "After noting carefully the mental operations of thousands of pupils in the high schools, I am convinced that nothing can take the place of Latin in high school work."

But, in gaining a knowledge of the syntax of Latin, that is spread out on the pages of the Latin grammar, and that is so vital to the knowledge and use of the language, will a knowledge of English syntax avail nothing?

Is a knowledge of the twelve or more different relations in which an English noun can be placed, no aid in seeing these same relations when found in another tongue? Can our varied objective constructions, the indirect objects, the factitive or double objects, throw no light on Latin datives and accusatives?

Have the absolute constructions of other languages, the participial and infinitive phrases and clauses, the impersonal or unipersonal, and many abbreviated forms of foreign tongues, nothing to gain from the student's knowledge of such constructions in his native speech?

If it be said that the study of English syntax gains great advantage from the study of foreign forms and agreements which point out by external marks the syntactical relationships, no one can question the truth of this statement. The recognition of syntax relations is easier when the word-form is limited to a certain use. No one can deny the value to an elementary student of such plain guide marks as inflection gives to a knowledge of the structure of sentences.

But this gain is chiefly in a certain elementary part of the subject. There are syntactical relations in every language which far transcend all the powers of inflection to point them out. The very fact that inflections are largely depended on to show syntax, tends to obscure the more subtle language relations.

While Latin study can greatly aid the study of English it is also most true that a right study of English constructions will bring very effective aid to the study of Latin. And the same thing is even more true in relation to the modern languages which follow more nearly than Latin the English type of structure.

But there is a reason still greater than that of the inherent nature of the study, why the study of English may and should be made a help to the acquirement of foreign tongues. The mind goes always most naturally from the known to the unknown, from the native to the foreign. The facts of English are already mostly in the possession of the native student. He has not tested nor systematized his knowledge. But he does understand in general how to construct his sentences

on the right logical basis, and to put the words that he knows into their right order and relationships. It is good pedagogy and good sense that all this knowledge should be turned to account in gaining entrance into the syntactical relations of other tongues. To ignore it all, to begin dogmatically with the foreign grammar, and afterwards compare it superficially with our own, does not meet the demands of the case. The thought and practice of the best educators to-day is against such ignoring of the value of English study. While careful comparisons should be made, it is the English construction that should first be known, and the emphasis of the comparison as a rule should rest on the English side.

But this is not an argument against the early study of Latin, nor against accepting all the aid that it can give to the study of English. Action and reaction must both be allowed. Comparisons of two kinds of grammar *made from both sides*, will do more for the increase of language power than either alone can do.

But it seems reasonable (and the results are also capable of demonstration), that after the student of Latin has become in a degree familiar with the common Latin inflections, and has gained a general insight into the government and agreement of inflectional forms, the later study of Latin has as much to gain from the study of English as it can contribute to the same; nay, that it will receive even more than it can give by such comparative study.

### III

## PLACE OF GRAMMAR IN THE SCHOOL COURSE

If past history, experience, and the history of education be taken for guides, the study of grammar will not be neglected and the method of its inculcation will become an object of particular inquiry and solicitude.—GOOLD BROWN.

The body of grammatical facts appropriate to the elementary school is rather limited.—CARPENTER, BAKER, AND SCOTT.

A little technical grammar sympathetically taught is within the normal powers and interests of grammar school students.—LEWIS.

The teacher can introduce the idea if the class is sufficiently advanced to take it without getting confused. It is good teaching to give children hints of what is to come.—BROWN AND DEGARMO.

Without intelligent interest there can be no profitable study. For many pupils the higher study of English grammar is a vain and cruel martyrdom, worse than a waste of time.—JOYNES.

High school pupils need in some way or other to be trained systematically in a knowledge of the important facts relating to inflection, syntax, sentence structure, word order, and word composition in their native language.—CARPENTER, BAKER, AND SCOTT.

Grammar is not the stepping-stone, but the finishing instrument.—M. MARCEL.

The work of learning to speak and write correctly, properly precedes technical grammar. The ideal plan is for the child to be reared in circumstances in which he never hears any but correct English, and so finds no other kind natural to him.

But the circumstances of life are not ideal and the child who enters school has usually many faults that need correction. For these and other reasons the language lessons which furnish the occasion for the child to gain freedom in expression must also supply some simple principles of criticism that will enable him to recognize and so to correct his own faulty language.

In other words, the language work of the lower schools must be largely constructive and proceed along the practical lines of aiding the children to express themselves correctly under intelligent supervision. But mingled with this constructive work, even from an early age, there should be some analytical work also, and some attention should be given to the grammatical facts that come within the range of the child's observation.

The teaching of these elementary principles is in a sense grammar. Yet it is not a scientific course in grammar. The facts and principles are not introduced in logical order, but are determined by the present needs of expression, and the faults that are to be corrected.

It is the practice of some teachers in their elementary language lessons to avoid so far as possible the terms of technical grammar. The forming of such arbitrary compounds as action-words, quality-words, etc., illus-

trates the devices that have been employed to avoid the language of scientific grammar.

But we think that many mistakes have been made along this line. While there can be no objection to a roundabout mode of expression if the precise scientific word would be misunderstood, or if it interrupts too much the present purpose of the lesson to introduce and explain it, yet the true grammatical terms are all to find their place finally in the pupils' vocabulary.

The first time when it would be convenient to use the word would seem to be the proper time to introduce it. Nor is it needful always to interrupt the lesson by teaching fully the scientific meaning of the terms, but only far enough to prevent any present confusion of thought. Logical definitions (if grammatical definitions can be made really logical), may be postponed until a later period of study. It will not only be a saving of time in the end to use the terms of grammar somewhat freely in the language-lessons, but it is entirely consistent with the way in which most of our words are acquired. It may be said, not of children alone, but of men and women, that among the words which they use freely and correctly in speech and writing, there are many which they would be at a loss to give a logical definition for, and that the dangers in such use are no greater in the vocabulary of grammar than in other lines of thought.

At the end of the language-lessons of the elementary course, then, the child ought not only to know most of the important facts of grammar, but the terms of gram-

mar should, to a considerable extent, be familiar to his ear and thought. But the simple principles of language thus gained in a somewhat desultory fashion through the language-lessons of the lower grades, need to be reviewed and placed in a more orderly arrangement in the child's mind, if he would hold them in memory ready for use.

It would seem that the work of the last year of the elementary language-lessons should be a classified review of the terms and principles of grammar that have already come before the children in applied form. Such a year's course will include simple definitions of the grammatical terms that have been used. It will always be in a measure unsatisfactory with a certain proportion of the pupils, whose interest can only be aroused by subjects of a less abstract nature than analytical grammar. Yet many of these pupils are well ready for this study, and if it be entirely relegated to the high school or college course, those who never enter upon high school work will miss entirely the special and important kind of linguistic training which grammar alone can give.

But the work in grammar cannot be finished in the grammar school. Under one name or another it is an important part of the high school course. It extends itself also into the advanced language training of the college and the university, becoming ever more interesting and valuable as the knowledge of foreign tongues brings the student into closer touch with all those lines of comparative and historical grammar that belong to the large realm of philological research.

## IV

### DEFINITIONS IN GRAMMAR

"It is difficult to make perfectly accurate grammatical definitions, and still more difficult for a pupil to understand them accurately; but difficulties are not surmounted by being evaded."

Definitions are not the only means by which a knowledge of the import of language may be acquired nor by which the acquisition of knowledge may be aided. To point out things and tell their names constitutes a large part of the instruction by which the meaning of words is conveyed to the mind, and sometimes a mere change of terms sufficiently conveys an idea. Yet if we would guard against all possibility of misapprehension and show precisely the meaning of a word, we must define it.—GOOLD BROWN.

Elementary definitions however simple—or even incomplete—must be strictly true *so far*. Nothing should be taught which in either method or matter shall ever need to be *un-taught*.—JOYNES.

A loose definition of a class necessarily fails to meet the instances that arise; consequently easy cases alone are noticed, difficulties are slurred over, distinctions are confounded; in short, where explanation is most wanted, it is not forthcoming.—BAIN.

Definitions invariably *follow* the completion of the study of that which is defined.—W. T. HARRIS.

Although grammar is based on logic, there is no

subject of school study in which it is harder to frame logical definitions than in this. Indeed, the grammar definitions which are strictly logical are often hard to apply as tests of classification. To define a noun as a name is not logical, since the basis of classification for parts of speech is the relation which the word holds in the sentence. Yet no definition based on logical relationships can be given which children can easily use in selecting the nouns of a given sentence.

A definition that seems labored and confusing, even if it is true, has little educative value. An elderly lady once said that she had remembered for sixty years the definition of a common noun as she learned it from Murray's grammar: "A common noun stands for kinds containing many sorts and for sorts containing many individuals under them." But she could not remember that she ever attached any particular meaning to the phrases which she had thus committed to memory.

The difficulty of framing grammatical definitions that are wholly satisfactory is plainly illustrated by the failures and disagreements of the text-books in trying to tell just what is meant by case, number, mood, etc. It is far easier to see the difference between "book" and "books" and to call these forms singular and plural, than it is to decide whether number is "that property of", or "that change of form which," or "the distinction between," etc.

The explanations of grammatical terms for elementary classes should record what needs to be understood at

this stage of the teaching. Fuller understanding and more logical definitions will follow later. The early definitions should, however, be consistent with what is to follow. Thus, to use the words of another \* “That a pronoun stands for a noun is true, but not ‘to avoid repetition of a noun,’ which is only true in certain instances and is incidental to the real character of pronouns.”

Definitions are the highest and most difficult department of science. There can be successful classification of words and clear recognition of their grammatical forms with very few definitions of technical terms. The grammatical work of very elementary classes should be somewhat broadly done. Yet enough of technical grammar can be given to children’s classes to serve as a basis for the very large amount of practice work which is needed to lead the child to speak and write correctly, and also to know the reason why the forms he is taught to use are the correct ones.

By advanced students of English finer and more numerous distinctions should be drawn. In this maturer stage of the study the student should form for himself, by careful examination of the language as he knows it, logical definitions of the grammatical terms that he uses. The most educative part of grammar study will lie in this line.

Yet it is the work of making the definition that is chiefly of value, rather than the definition itself after

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\*Prof. E. S. Joynes, of South Carolina College.

it has been made. With the successful accomplishment of the effort there is little further need of the definition as a test for classification. It has done its work for the student, and may now for the most part be safely pigeon-holed or laid upon the shelf.

## V

## ANALYSIS AND PARSING

"Ah, it's me," said Mr. Squeers, "and *me's* the first person singular, nominative case, agreeing with the verb *it's* and governed by *Squeers understood*, as a acorn, a hour."—DICKENS.

Since the English Language was not made to parse, it is not necessary that we should subordinate any of our idioms to parsing.—SNODDY.

A sentence is a living thing, and all analysis is, in a way, an insult to it.—LEWIS.

If a noble sentiment clearly expressed and of literary beauty is needlessly subjected to grammatical analysis, that is pedagogical crime; but if an obscure passage is being cleared up by patient analytic process, that may be the best teaching possible.—BARBOUR.

The pupil who is taught to separate a sentence into its elements is learning to analyze thought, and consequently to think. — PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION OF GREEN'S ENGLISH ANALYSIS.

The intelligent analysis of English sentences is really an analysis of the processes of thought there expressed. This discipline is fundamental and of the highest value; it sharpens the student's power of insight and discrimination, and helps him directly in every department of his work.—TOLMAN.

Analysis should be confined to simple sentences until these are thoroughly familiar.—JOYNES.

I have taught, more or less, almost every subject embraced in the ordinary school or college course, and the most fruitful discipline of all for the young pupils I consider to be grammatical analysis.—PRESIDENT GARFIELD.

With the birth of English grammar began that time-honored exercise known as parsing, which consists in giving the grammatical description of each word, by naming its part of speech, its inflectional form, and its relation to other words in the sentence. The exercise had its value, but the numerous properties assigned to each word, and the parrot-like repetition of rules of agreement, sometimes made it as numbing to the faculties as it was tedious to the listener.

Kirkham's grammar, published in 1823, had a pronounced effect on the teaching of English grammar by means of its carefully developed "Systematic Order of Parsing." As an example of its parsing models, we may give the one for nouns.:

Noun, why? Common, proper or collective, why?

Gender and why? Person and why? Number and why?

Case and why? Rule. Decline it.

The parsing of the three words "John's hand trembles" occupies an entire page in Kirkham's grammar.

In 1847 another important grammatical event occurred in the publication of Samuel S. Greene's English Analysis, which was soon used as a text-book in all parts of the United States. Analysis begins with the sentence as a whole, and recognizes phrases and clauses also as parts of the sentence, thus adding to the older

parsing exercises some important elements. Yet analysis as well as parsing has a tendency to exalt technique and to become tedious through repetition of useless details.

Another objection that is sometimes urged against both analysis and parsing is that by the emphasis laid on the technicalities of language much good literature has been deprived of its true literary effect.

This misuse of grammatical drill, however, has mostly disappeared from American schools. In the opinion of some, the reaction against parsing has been carried too far and it would be an advantage if some of it could be reinstated in American schools. There is a grammatical drill in both analysis and parsing which it is foolish to frown upon. As has been well said, "Although what is called parsing, or assigning words to their part of speech, is a juvenile exercise yet it is nevertheless, the surest test of a person's having learnt that which grammar has to teach."

The botanist who investigates the structure of a flower is not thereby debarred from the enjoyment of flowers, nor from seeing them also in poetical relations. Neither is the study of the grammatical structure of a piece of literature necessarily a foe to the appreciation of its aesthetic value. On the contrary, excellences are lost upon the student unless he first grasps the logical relations of the thought itself; and the attempt by the pupil to formulate these relations gives the teacher the best evidence as to whether the thought is truly understood.

Parsing in Latin is chiefly an exercise in accidence; in

English it is an exercise in syntax. The simpler grammatical ideas are easily grasped through the study of Latin, but in a logical language like ours, parsing has another kind of disciplinary value that is not to be depreciated.

For the convenience of teachers some models for analysis and parsing are affixed to this chapter, but each teacher should be able to modify all such models, or to construct new ones according to the needs of the class. Parsing models should be as simple as possible, and emphasis should always be laid upon the correct interpretation of the thought rather than upon adherence to the form of the model. There are idiomatic words and phrases to which models cannot apply, and in dealing with ordinary sentences there is constant danger of useless repetition of points already fully known. The teacher should therefore often turn from the formal model, and fall back upon the more educative exercise of a good grammatical "quiz."

The questions for this are of two main classes: First, questions of fact, as, What part of speech? What mode? What case? What relation? and second, the still better class of questions: Why the subjunctive mode in this sentence? Why this tense or case?

In a word, a good grammatical drill passes lightly over well-known or useless points, and brings out those of greatest linguistic value. In the hands of a wise and skillful teacher analysis and parsing are among the most useful tools for language teaching, but they should both be used always for broad ends and not for trivial ones.

## FORM OF ANALYSIS

(To be used in whole or in part according to the needs of the class.)

### I. Kind of sentence:

Declarative, Interrogative, Imperative, Exclamatory.

Simple, Complex, Compound.

NOTE.—Since most sentences are declarative, the first distinction needs to be noted only when the sentence differs from the assertive form.

### II. If a simple or a complex sentence, give

- (1) Entire subject and predicate.
- (2) Subject-word. The adjective elements that limit it.
- (3) Predicate term. (Name copula and attribute if distinct.) Object or objects. Adverbial elements.

Later, any clause or phrase (if desired) can receive more minute analysis.

- (1) Give its basis.
- (2) Then the subordinate parts.

### III. If the sentence is compound

- (1) Give the principal divisions,
- (2) Analyze each as if it were a simple or complex sentence.

## FORM OF PARSING

**Part of Speech.** Inflectional Form (if any). Relation to Other Words.

NOTE.—In parsing, lay special emphasis on all peculiarities of the word, either of form or relationship. If a pupil shows appreciation of the real character of a word it is not well to discourage him by insisting too closely on adherence to a form of statement. More real thought is often awakened by a good grammatical question than by formally parsing the word. Models should be used so far as they save time, or stimulate consecutive thinking. If they begin to consume time needlessly, or to stultify fresh thought and interest, it is time to dispense with them.

## VI

### SENTENCE DIAGRAMS AND OTHER DEVICES

Some device by which the whole class can work together may be of value in large classes.—SOUTHWORTH.

A diagram is almost necessarily misleading in many ways. The half mechanical accomplishing of diagraming comes to be sought rather than an intimate comprehension of the sentence. Those peculiar features of a sentence which cannot be diagramed are lost sight of.—TOLMAN.

At this stage of his studies the pupil should not be required always to analyze sentences to their very dregs, nor should he be expected to analyze any sentence that is so complicated as to be very puzzling.—KITTRIDGE AND ARNOLD.

Too minute analysis may prove perplexing in complex sentences. Sufficient drill in the analysis of phrases will be given by the simple sentences.—HARPER AND BURGESS.

In the study of the individual sentence, analysis properly precedes the work of parsing. The early exercises in analysis should be of a broad and general kind, marking out merely the main features of the sentence. There should be abundant practice in this general analysis without confusing the pupils' minds by points of detail. At a later period clauses and phrases should be analyzed and specific words parsed.

In dealing with long and intricate sentences, a rapid method of interpretation called "construing" is often

of most value. It is a kind of continuous analysis, a combination of the methods of parsing and analysis giving rapidly the functions of clauses, phrases or words in their order, but pausing here and there for fuller discussion of the more difficult points. An extension of this analytic interpretation to the paragraph, or to connected thought in narrative prose and poetry, supplies some elements of value that are not met by the analysis of single disconnected sentences.

Caution should be used against supplying ellipses for the sake of ease in parsing, when they are not needed for the correct structure of the sentence itself; nor are dead forms and idioms always to be explained by analogy.

A device once extensively used in grammar teaching was that of diagraming sentences. But there has been a great reaction against its use. Teachers discovered that the complications of English sentences require many variations of the form of diagram, and that some of the subtler points of analysis can never be truly shown in this way. In short, diagraming degenerated into an unprofitable puzzle, the technical effort to fit the diagram to the sentence crowding out the real language study, which is the main object of the teaching.

Yet the fact that there are limits to the usefulness of diagrams is no reason for rejecting them wholly. Many a device that has often been misused is still of value in the hands of a wise teacher.

The diagram analysis appeals to the eye, which is

the most impressible of all the senses. The diagram can be made rapidly and left upon the blackboard for further study. It is of use in reviews, being specially adapted to the testing of large classes to see whether logical relations have been truly grasped. It gives a great saving of time over other forms of sentence analysis.

The form used should be as simple as possible and omit all needless elaboration. One diagram that has been found useful is simply a tabulated statement of the great sentence elements, as illustrated by the following sentence:—

“Yesterday, during the recess, two little boys of my school found a strange animal in the schoolyard.”

Subject, boys.	{ Two little of my school
Predicate, found	{ a strange animal (obj.) yesterday during the recess in the school yard.

The detailed analysis of the phrases is omitted, since the relations of these words would seldom be misunderstood. If one of the elements of a sentence is a clause, this can be included in an abbreviated form and then analyzed below in another diagram.

A plan of analysis which does not involve the re-writing of the sentence is suggested in Southworth's English Grammar and Composition. This is ac-

complished by means of underscoring, overscoring, parentheses, brackets, etc.

The limit of usefulness for diagrams is very quickly reached. Idiomatic phrases and all complicated points are best discussed orally. When a word or phrase holds several relations in the sentence, the diagram is likely to do harm rather than good. All of the sentence relations need to be expressed, yet the repetition of a word or phrase in various parts of the diagram gives confusion. We must see to it that the aids we use in teaching are never suffered to become burdens or to detract from the main end that is to be gained.

To sum the matter up: Diagrams are of use in teaching and in testing classes (especially young classes), as a rapid form of expressing to the eye the general relations of sentences. But for difficult points of analysis they have only a limited value. For unravelling the mysteries of idiomatic English nothing can take the place of a good grammatical "quiz."

## VII

### SOME WORDS TO TEACHERS.

Theory guides practice, practice modifies theory.—BOYDEN.

"It is easy to lay down general principles, but hard to apply them successfully."

The study of grammar develops and perfects those forms of thought which, like the honey-cell of the bee, only later become filled with rich and substantial content.—JOYNES.

Since grammar is a subject that must be taught in the schools, happy is that teacher who loves to teach it, and can awaken in his pupils a love for the study. It must be confessed that grammar as often taught presents few attractions to children; yet if their interest is really gained there is no subject in the common school curriculum that can yield larger educative results than this.

If the children are to love grammar the teaching of it must be adapted to their age and experience. They should not be troubled with too much grammatical technique until they know enough to perceive its desirableness. It takes some maturity of judgment to appreciate truly the value of a close analysis of one's own thought. The teacher should not waste time in what may seem to the pupil like hair-splitting discussions over matters of no practical importance.

It is not easy for mature minds to make logical defi-

nitions of grammatical terms, and it is well-nigh impossible for children to appreciate or apply strictly logical definitions for some of the grammatical terms which they need to use. Because of this difficulty some teachers demand no definitions at all that even approach exactness. There is certainly a serious error to be avoided on this side. Loose teaching will always produce loose thinking, and the chief value of grammar is to secure careful discriminations in thought and speech.

How then shall the teacher find and keep the wise mean between no attempt at logical definition and the labored assumption of logical correctness which makes the subject tedious, and is useless for application in elementary language teaching? Some definitions must be given. Some logical distinctions must be drawn. But the number and form of these must depend on various circumstances and will vary greatly with different classes.

It is by no means easy to keep the right balance between looseness and inaccuracy on the one hand and the insistence on logical exactness which lays fetters hard to be borne upon immature minds. But on the teacher's skill in doing this the success of the work in grammar will very largely depend.

Grammar may be taught so as to be narrowing and pedantic on the one hand or obscure and uninteresting on the other. It may carry its analytical method beyond the point of really educative influence over the minds which the teacher has to deal with. Grammar also sometimes assumes a false arrogance as to its own authority in matters of usage. The emphasis should

always be laid upon real facts found in the language, and not upon negations or prohibitions of this or that form of expression. It is hardly worth while to be continually setting up men of straw to be knocked down by argument.

The method used should be inductive rather than authoritative. The students of grammar are themselves the explorers in the field of language, working, however, under the wise guidance of one who has traversed the same paths before them.

The teacher must not forget that in the closer distinctions of grammar, absolute decision of a disputed point cannot always be reached. The grammarians must not be over positive in his opinion on some of these points. It has been said that "Dogmatism saves time," but does it in the end? Two interpretations may sometimes both be correct. In dealing with disputed questions it is not needful always for the teacher to bring every one of his pupils to the same understanding of the intricate points that he himself holds. He should have a definite opinion, of course, and make it known to the class, with his reasons therefor. But let him beware how he dwarfs the power of judgment in his pupils by insisting on entire unanimity in their verdict, or invariable conformity to his own view. In the discussion of the subtler questions of syntax it is not the decision reached that is of chief importance. It is the power of thinking gained by the effort to compare and discriminate the relations of a thought that is of truest educational value.

Finally, let the teacher who loves language work and has labored faithfully for his pupils in this field, be of good cheer, even if the results seem small. In every class there are illogical minds that grasp imperfectly, or sometimes apparently not at all, the abstract relations of the ideas and words with which grammar deals. But results do not show themselves all at first. Many are the men and women, who showed no brilliant powers as boys and girls in the grammar class but who yet look back gratefully upon the school training that gave them their first glimpses into the character of logical thinking. By and by these grammatical ideas, partly perceived by children, grow into more perfect clearness in their minds as they come to perceive that the fundamental relations of thought and of speech are identical and that a knowledge of these relations is of practical importance to every thinking mind.

The real results of school work are seen in their true perspective relations only through the vista of later years. But even if the work of the grammar class for some of the pupils may seem to be but a qualified success, it should not cause discouragement. Grammar is only one means toward language power. The teacher is only one of many agencies that are at work. Let him take up this necessary subject of English grammar with courageous heart, feeling sure that faithful work along this line is sure in its own time and way to contribute large and important elements to the comprehensive end which is perhaps the highest result of education, namely, the perfection of thought and its fitting expression.

## VIII

### SOME WORDS TO WRITERS

Rules for style as for manners must be mostly suggestive.

—T. W. HIGGINSON.

Remember the other person. I must write with pains, that he may read with ease.—G. H. PALMER.

Men learn to think accurately and hence to express themselves accurately and logically by the experiences of life. Grammar merely aids this process.—CARPENTER, BAKER, AND SCOTT.

No writer, however brilliant, should be excused for grammatical errors that might be avoided.—MARSHALL T. BIGELOW.

The connective parts of sentences are the most important of all, and require the greatest care and attention.—WRITER'S HANDBOOK.

Learn grammar, learn all you can about the tools with which you intend to work all your life.—SHUMAN'S STEPS INTO JOURNALISM.

Much literature that has become standard was first printed in newspapers; but, as the newspaper in its news records the life of every day, so in its style it too frequently records the slang of daily life and the faults of ordinary conversation. A newspaper contains bits of English prose from hundreds of different pens, some skilled, some unskilled, and this jumble of styles does not determine good use.—BUEHLER.

Accuracy and dash then—the combination of the two—must be our difficult aim.—G. H. PALMER.

Be neither too lax or too precise in your use of language.—  
T. W. HIGGINSON.

Good style is impossible without grammatical correctness, but grammatical correctness does not necessarily carry with it good style.—KITTREDGE AND ARNOLD.

Journalists and authors as well as teachers have a professional interest in the grammatical characteristics of English usage. The power of the daily press is one of the strongest influences at work to modify language idioms. Brevity and force are the qualities chiefly sought, and in the effort to gain these many a newspaper writer seems to indorse the sentiment of Thomas Jefferson who wrote, "Whenever by small grammatical negligence the energy of the idea can be condensed or a word be made to stand for a sentence, I hold grammatical rigor in contempt."

Possessive cases not used by the older writers, such as "Boston's mayor," "Chicago's city government," are often seen in the daily papers. Even phrases of several words sometimes receive the sign, as, "The Pacific Coast storm's havoc." (*N. Y. Tribune*), Such expressions have conciseness in their favor, though they mark a wide departure from the principle given in some of the older books that personality is necessary to the true possessive idea. The growing frequency of the split infinitive whenever logical precision or compactness of phrase can be secured thereby is largely due to journalistic practice. The radical tendencies of the daily press are undoubtedly carried too far. But in spite of some carelessness and some objectionable

disregard of linguistic purity, American newspaper English has steadily grown in strength and incisiveness, so that it has been justly described as "a limpid, strong, simple and fairly admirable vehicle of thought."

But although a journalist can perhaps afford to be a little less conservative than a teacher in regard to new language forms, yet for him also the general rule is a safe one:

"Be not the first by whom the new is tried,  
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside."

Within a recent period the proposed establishment of schools of journalism, or of college courses for journalists, has emphasized the idea that writers can have training for their work. It may be said that the studies for a journalist are of general rather than technical character. Yet there is certainly a choice among general subjects to be studied if one would prepare himself for the work of a writer. Grammatical knowledge is, indeed, far from being a main requisite for successful writing. But given "a call to write," the "sense for news," the terseness and originality of thought that produce a "telling style," and the general common-sense that gives adaptability to the needs of a given paper or class of readers, it is still possible for a journalist's work to be greatly marred by a lack of grammatical knowledge or by carelessness in sentence constructions.

The work of the book writer is more deliberate than that of the journalist and requires still greater care in

style and grammatical construction. Imperfections of grammar that may be to a degree pardonable in a daily newspaper would effectually kill a more dignified effort at bookmaking. Authors, even more than journalists, cannot afford to undervalue the need of familiarity with all the tests of grammatical correctness that can be applied to their work.

Even for the technical forms of a written paper, grammatical knowledge is required. Punctuation is dependent upon grammar. Marks of punctuation are simply the mechanical means of interpreting the grammatical relations of the sentence. Even for this, the most formal part of a writer's work, a knowledge of grammar must lie at the basis.

Many journalistic writers are led into their work by force of circumstances rather than premeditated choice. Employment on some country paper is often the first step toward the higher walks of journalism, and there are hosts of country editors and local reporters who have drifted into their profession without college training or any extended courses of study. For these and for other busy writers compendiums of grammar seem to be needed that are neither so elementary as the ordinary school text-books of grammar, nor so profound as most of the works on philology. There are certain flagrant errors that occur so often in the work of young or careless writers that they become a weariness to the more experienced editors or critics on whom devolves the task of correcting the imperfect manuscript. To meet such cases various lists of

"Don'ts" for writers have been compiled, as William Cullen Bryant's once famous *Index Expurgatorius*, which, however, condemned some things that would now pass without criticism. "Is being done," for instance, is now in general use. Some of these "Don'ts" belong to the field of diction rather than that of grammar, but many have a grammatical bearing also.

Among many "Don'ts" which writers may well pay heed to, the following may be noted:

Don't use *couple* for *two*; *lengthy* for *long*; *expect* for *believe*; *aggravate* for *irritate*; *stopped* for *stayed* (He stopped at the hotel); *past* for *last* (the past two weeks); *less* for *fewer*; *without* for *unless*; *if* for *whether*; *such* for *so*; *between* for *among*; *quite* for *very* or *rather* (as *quite* pretty; *quite* means *entirely*); *during* for *in* (*during* means *throughout*); *but what* for *but*; *as for that* (I don't know as I shall go); *as though* for *as if*. (Fill out the ellipsis and see which conjunction is needed, as, He walks as [he would walk] if [not though] he were tired.)

Don't use a plural verb or pronoun after *each* and *every*.

Don't say *and which* (unless there are co-ordinate clauses with *which*), or, "Try *and* do it" for "Try to do it."

Don't use superfluous words, as, ponder (*over*); All (*of*) those needles; Come back (*again*); Where is he gone (*to*)? Don't speak of a "widow-woman" or of "new beginners."

Don't use contractions often in writing, and never the wrong contraction (as *don't* for *doesn't*).

Don't be careless as to the use or the omission of articles.

If connected phrases or clauses require different particles or connectives see that each is expressed, as, "This is as old *as* or even older *than* the other," ("as" is sometimes erroneously omitted.)

Say *I* if you mean *I*, and not *we*. The editorial *we* is often abused.

Don't mix *thou* and *you* pronoun-forms in the same piece of writing. This is sometimes done by writers of verse.

Don't omit pronoun subjects merely for the sake of brevity. The telegraphic style (Went to New York; consulted with the mayor; attended a committee meeting, etc.), is not to be commended.

Don't allow a verb to be attracted into a tense that does not belong to it as, "He declared the moon was made of green cheese," "He hoped to have gone to Europe." The older writers allowed such attractions as giving unity to the sentence, but modern English does not favor them.

If you use a pronoun, either personal or relative, have a care that its antecedent and agreements are both correct and evident.

Don't make quotations carelessly nor use "dangling participles," and before using a parenthetical sentence or a long involved construction ask yourself whether two separate sentences would not better express the thought.

But a writer needs a deeper knowledge of grammar

than is suggested by a list of grammatical "Don'ts" if he is to be a discriminating critic of his own writings and a master of the tools of his trade. The harder questions of syntax are the subtle ones that do not even occur to the superficial mind. For these no rules will be of much avail. There must be clear discernment of all the intrinsic relations of the sentence. Unless these are as familiar to the writer as are the hidden parts of his engine to the competent machinist it is impossible that he should know what is the matter with a halting sentence or how to change it so as to give it effectiveness.

It may be said that there have been good writers who had no grammatical training, and also that there are instances in which an extensive knowledge of philology seems to induce erudite sentence forms that are fatal to force of expression. John Bright was one of the most forcible of writers. General Grant in his "Memoirs" showed himself superior as a master of style to most of the trained linguists. But both John Bright and General Grant had the logical habit of mind, however it had been gained. The study of grammar is not the only, nor indeed the chief means by which a person learns to think logically. Yet it is one of the important correctives to that turgid, illogical manner of thinking which expresses itself in long, involved and loosely related sentences that weary and confuse the mind of the reader.

The understanding of difficult grammatical constructions is no hindrance to simple forms of expression. On

the contrary, the one who best understands these complex relationships is the one most likely to choose the simple sentence for ordinary purposes, reserving the complex constructions for those cases where they are really needed. A logical thinker, if he uses a long sentence at all, will usually construct it after a very simple plan,—perhaps as a sequence of clauses or phrases co-ordinate with one another or formed after a similar pattern. It has been said that the longest sentence known is that of “The House that Jack Built,” which is composed chiefly of adjective clauses piled one upon another.

The great principle of style, according to Herbert Spencer, is economy of the reader’s attention. This is secured, first of all, by having the plan of the sentence such as to give perfect clearness of meaning. Perspicuity and precision are due more to the forms of sentence construction than to anything else. An inexperienced writer, in reviewing his own work does well to ask himself, “Have I made it perfectly evident what is the subject of every verb, the antecedent of every pronoun, and the modifying relation of each adjunct term? If not, if the reader’s mind is delayed for an instant by any doubt as to the relations of ideas in the connected thought, attention is distracted and the style is weakened.

The good writer will recognize not only the logical relations within a given sentence, but also those which bind the sentences themselves into an harmonious whole. He must have a keen sense of the idea of *and*,

*but, or, if, because, or therefore*, between the successive thoughts. He must also know whether this idea will be apparent without the medium of an expressed conjunction. He needs also many synonymous terms or expedients by which he can give variety to his sentence connections and avoid the infelicity of the too frequent use of the same conjunction. Among the niceties of style there is perhaps nothing that distinguishes a good writer more than the pertinent use of connectives, making the flow of thought consecutive while avoiding all redundancy of expression.

Many of the specific grammatical points which a writer must deal with relate to the question of concord or agreement, especially when a collective noun, or a "false plural" (as wages) is used, or when there is a hovering sense of either singular or plural. Since most verbal forms are neutral in number, cases of agreement are so rare that when they occur at all they ought to add something to the effect of a sentence and not detract from it. If the idea of singularity or plurality is specially important it is well that the verb form should emphasize this prominence. Thus in "A thousand years is as one day" the singular verb gives emphasis to the fact that the thousand years is but one period of time.

There are instances in which the mere sound of the sentence suggests a disagreement that is a blemish to style, even if not strictly a grammatical error. One of the best marks of a good writer is that he can evade the question of doubtful concord so that the reader will

not be troubled with any questions regarding it. Instead of "Cards were invented to amuse an insane king" it is better to say "The game of cards was invented." Instead of "Damages were awarded," it may be better to say "The jury awarded damages." A neutral form of the verb can often be substituted for the form that requires concord. Thus in "Nine tenths of the happiness of mankind depends on," etc., some verb phrase as "must depend," "will depend," may sometimes be preferable. In "Neither poverty nor riches affect (affects) a man's happiness," a careful writer will often choose a neutral phrase, as, "will affect," "can affect."

The great principle of economy of attention is applicable here. The writer's own discriminating judgment must decide whether grammatical agreement shall be brought directly before the reader's mind, or avoided, as not increasing the precision or force of the sentence.

Some of the least satisfactory attempts at concord occur in the use of pronouns having both gender and number agreements, as, "If any one calls tell (him? him or her? them?) I am not at home." While literary usage has adopted the use of *him* in such cases (unless only women are in the class referred to), grammatical fastidiousness sometimes employs the awkward and obtrusive *him or her*, while colloquial disregard of grammatical fetters tends more and more to substitute *them* as the preferred neutral form. But an evasive expression such as "Say I am not at home," has its

own advantages in the situation. "Avoid the appearance of evil" is a good rule of grammar as well as of morals.

But among the grammatical questions which engage the writer's attention none are more important or perplexing than those that relate to the order of the parts of the sentence. And here few rules can be given. The only rule of much value is the general one: Keep the parts that are related near together, letting nothing intervene that will confuse the mind as to the relation that is intended. To keep a relative clause near its antecedent, a participial phrase near the noun which it limits, and such adverbs as *only* and *even* next to the words which they modify, these are some of the simplest points to be observed. But questions of euphony, rhythm, emphasis, and agreeable variety in sentence forms are also involved in the word order to be chosen.

An exercise in composition sometimes used in schools consists in arranging a sentence in all possible ways that are consistent with grammatical correctness and then deciding upon the comparative merits of these sentence forms. Although the professional writer has passed beyond the period for such juvenile exercises, his mind must nevertheless be continually performing a somewhat similar process regarding the sentences that he writes.

When a sentence contains several adverbial elements, either words, phrases or clauses, it may require no little study to distribute them most effectively. If there are several long adverbial elements one is usually

found at the beginning of the sentence, as, "After this conversation he went at once to the city to look for work." One of the most common ways of effecting an inversion is to put an adverb at the beginning, as,

Now came still evening on.  
Then ensued a lively scene.

While questions of word order are grammatical questions, it is by constructive effort rather than by ordinary grammatical analysis that they are to be solved. It is by practice in writing, aided by some grammatical tests, that a writer acquires skill in his sentence arrangements.

The pressure that is often felt by the journalist to write rapidly and also in a way to win instant attention, gives peculiar temptations to the disregard of grammatical principles. But a writer cannot afford to forget that while "grammatical correctness does not necessarily carry with it good style," it is also emphatically true that "good style is impossible without grammatical correctness."

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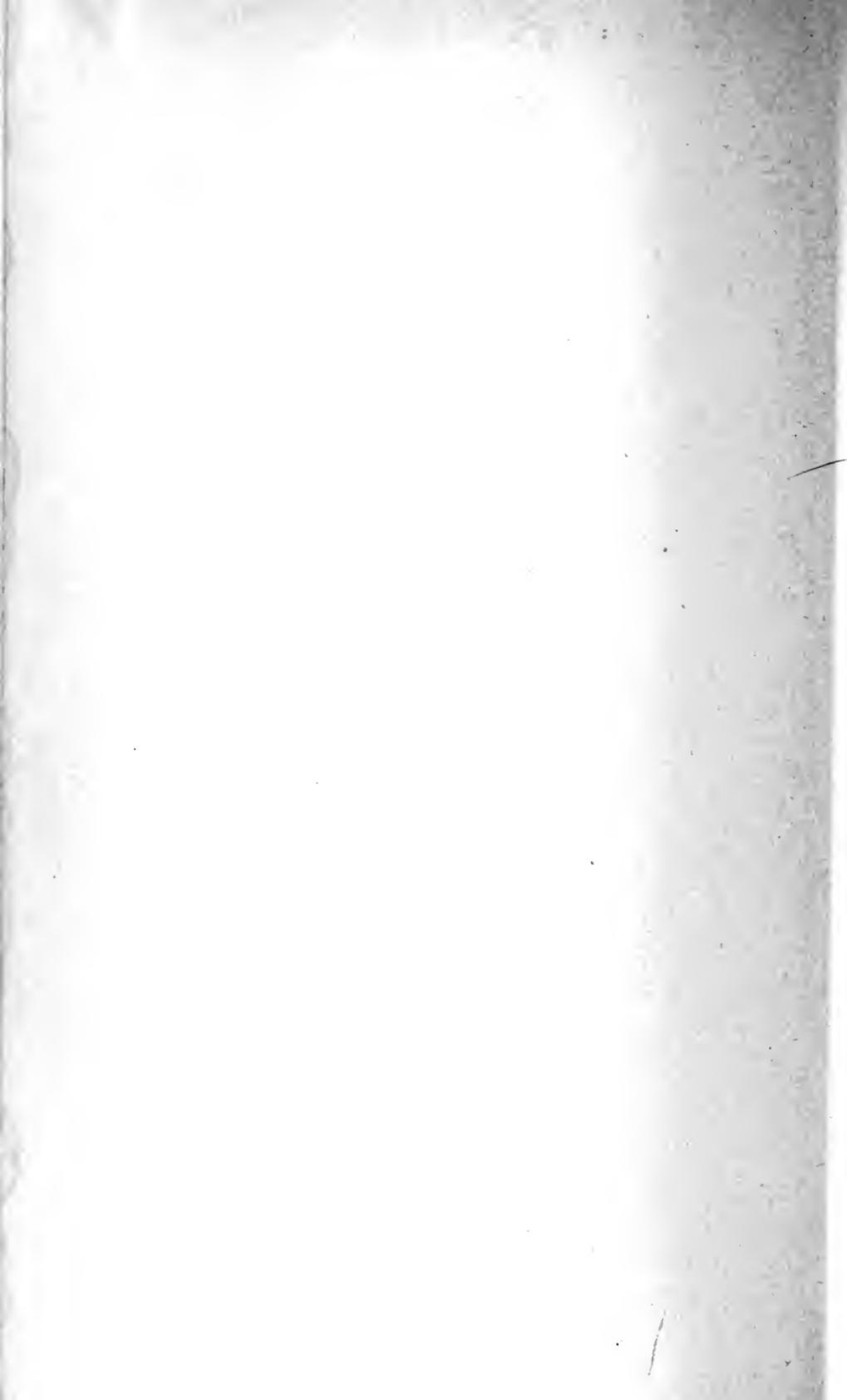
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